

Video Review

Equipment
Test Reports
and
Latest Tape &
Disc Reviews

\$1.75

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON CONSUMER VIDEO

GREATEST VIDEO GAMES **HOW THE CHAMPS BEAT THEM**

**Best Tapes and Discs
Of the Year**

**Video Gear:
Rent or Buy?**



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Video Review®

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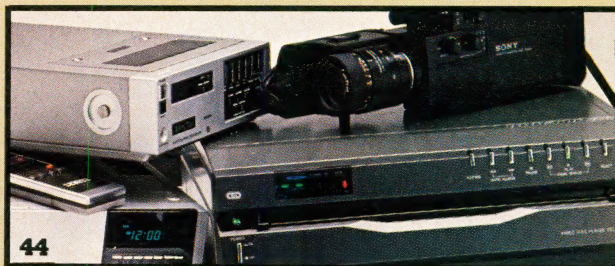
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Unretouched image created by a nationally-advertised VCR with 2 heads.

WITH MOST VCR'S, GETTING A CRISP PICTURE IS A MONSTROUS PROBLEM.

The frightening truth is, most VCR's can't improve on this picture. Because most VCR's, like the one that produced this unretouched "horror," have only two record/playback heads.

So typically what you get, especially in the 2-hour "standard play" mode, is a picture of compromised quality.

Because the heads must be a compromised design in order to function in every mode.

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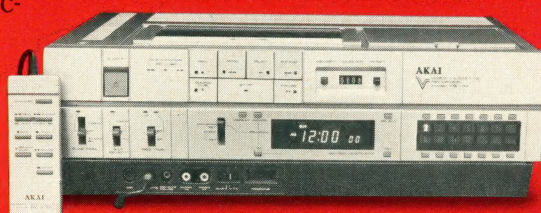
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Two years and two million VCRs

The video craze is dead. Long live video.

When we published the premiere issue of *Video Review* exactly two years ago this month, the total population of American VCR owners numbered in the hundreds of thousands, and videodisc players were still in limited, experimental distribution. Then it happened. Against the wind of all economic trends and forecasts, video took off far beyond all expectations—even those of the electronics industry itself. The figures multiplied: a million VCRs sold by 1980; two million by 1981; three and a half by 1982; and who knows how many more will be sold by the time this second-anniversary issue of *VR* hits the newsstands. Without running down all the numbers for videocameras, disc players, projection TV sets, tapes, discs and all the rest, it's easy to see why so many people feel these have been the two years of video's big boom.

But I think they're wrong. The video-equipment sales figures may or may not keep mounting for years to come. But no matter how many raw pieces of equipment are sold, right now—and the year or so immediately ahead of us—is far and away the most important period that video has yet to see.

Why? Because of the *nature* of the new video audience, not the mere number of bodies involved. With many electronics buffs, movie fans and other "natural" video enthusiasts now on their second (or third or more) VCRs, the new video-equipment owners of today and tomorrow are those on the brink of the "mass market." My Aunt Rose. Your cousin Larry. These are the strangers in the patchcord jungle—a breed that needs especially objective, critical and lively coverage and analysis of the video scene.

After all, the future of video cannot promise fewer problems than the past. It's easy to forget that video has seen some bumpy times over the past few years, with several VCR formats dying out, problems in videodisc pressing, piracy in prerecorded programs, counterfeiting blank tapes, and small-time scams striking video clubs, retail operations and other consumer services. Some may return and other problems may crop up—especially now that a vast generation of new video fans is about to emerge.

With this changing era in mind, we feel it's critical to look *ahead*—not back on our accomplishments—on this anniversary. First, beginning in this issue, we're making a major change in *VR* with the institution of a new kind of guide for videotapers. The only one of its kind, our new "Coming on TV" section now critically reviews more than 50 movies and other programs *scheduled for nationwide transmission* on TV this month.

We've also added a new "In the Works" department to our regular "Previews" section, with inside, sneak peeks at future videotapes and discs still in the planning or production stages.

Next month, we'll be launching a major new "Video Music" column about the fastest growing area in video programming today, written exclusively for *VR* by renowned rock critic Bruce Pollack.

In the same issue, we'll also be beginning a video-equipment version of "In the Works," called "On the Drawing Boards," with advance looks at the technology of tomorrow.

And what else? Plenty of big surprises. But if I reveal them now, they won't be surprises.

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Cleaning up TV shows—and video heads

DIRT

I would like to congratulate you for producing an informative quality magazine. I am very impressed with your technical reviews and the straightforward advice you give your readers.

As a professional servicer of video recorders, I would like to add my two cents. Whether requested or not, I always advise my customers about two things: dirt and abrasive head-cleaning tapes. In my opinion, these are the two worst enemies of the videotape recorder.

Briefly, my advice to VCR owners is: Avoid both. The proper way to clean a head is through the flushing action of cleaning solvent, not the rubbing action of an abrasive head cleaner. Most problems related to dirt can be avoided by simply keeping VCRs covered when not in use.

I would like to add that VCR owners following this advice have logged in excess of 2,000 hours of player use without appreciable head wear or transport problems, while those who did not experienced head, transport or tape-guide failures in as little as 300 hours. While some cynical readers may interpret this advice to be a sales pitch for service, I would like to stress that I make a much larger profit on replacing heads than I do on maintaining them.

Jordan L. Bier
A. Samson Electronics
Fort Lauderdale, FL

FATHER HILL BLUES

I was shocked to read your article, "The Political Plot to Cut Off Video Sex," in the January issue of *Video Review*. I can hardly believe that in 1982, in this free country that I'm so proud to be a citizen of, there are persons like Father Hill who support censorship.

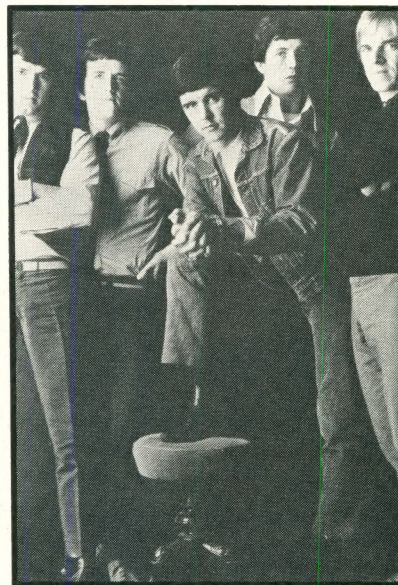
I too find the show Father Hill specifically described offensive. But what I would like to know is why Father Hill and his supporters spend their time watching such shows. I still haven't heard of a TV set that doesn't have an off switch or a channel selector to let you change the channels.

Like many other Americans, I do believe in what this country is supposed to stand for, and I believe in the First Amendment. I also feel that I have

the right to pay for and watch whatever I like in the privacy of my own home.

If Father Hill and his supporters do not like certain aspects of our home entertainment, I suggest they move to a Communist country where the government censors everything. In this day and age, we cannot afford to take any steps backward, but rather, only steps ahead.

Daniel Battaglia
Saucier, MS



Dave Clark: fave.

'FLOP TOP' FLAP

Regarding Ed Hulse's review of the Dave Clark Five's *Having a Wild Weekend* (Feb. '82 VR): "Five flop tops"? A group that has sold over \$250,000,000 in records worldwide and was commercially successful up to and after their disbanding in 1970? That's a flop?

Having a Wild Weekend was quite a bold step, actually. The Dave Clark Five didn't play the Dave Clark Five in the movie, and their songs were dubbed over the action. They didn't just lip-sync the lyrics. If that makes them "dated," is there anything more '60s than the Beatles?

Hulse seems to be one of many people who think that if it isn't the Beatles it isn't good. There are many others who disagree with him.

John J. Guion
Baltimore, MD

• The expression "flop tops" did not refer to the group's success or failure but to their hairstyle. Throughout the '60s, lots of rock performers and others with long hair were colloquially called "flop tops," as opposed to the longtime use of the term "longhairs" for classical musicians.—Ed.

WILD ABOUT HARRYHAUSEN

Time out! Normally, movie reviews rarely motivate me to respond in protest, simply because everyone has his or her right of opinion, and tastes surely vary from individual to individual. But my toes ached so badly after reading Mark Trost's review of *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (Dec. '81 VR) that I swear I had to limp to my typewriter.

The movie is certainly not a classic, but I was steamed by Trost's mention that Ray Harryhausen's stop-motion animation techniques are "dated" and have been outclassed by today's computer methods. That's like comparing an Edsel to the Volkswagen Rabbit. Just because one's newer and a bit more efficient doesn't necessarily make it any better.

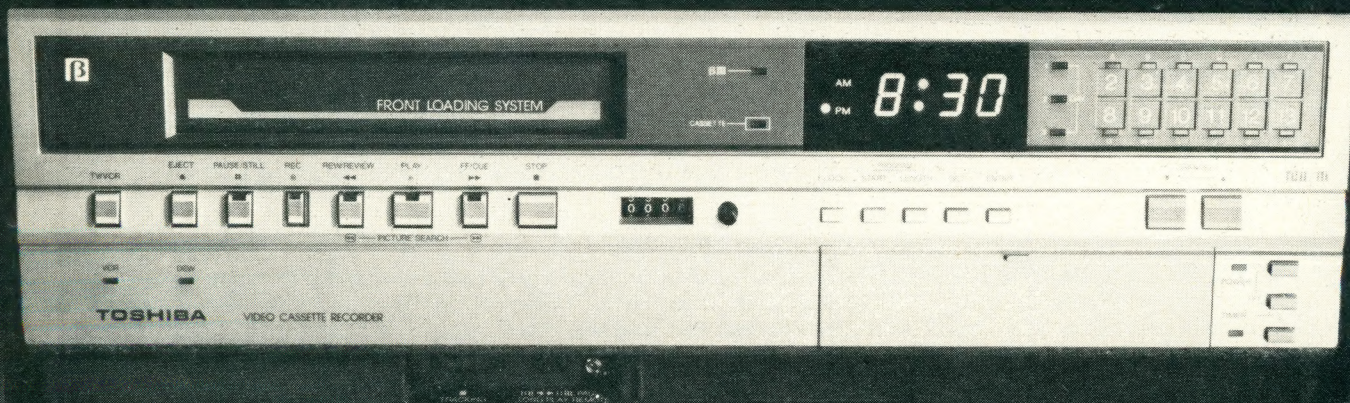
Animation-wise (at least in terms of stop motion), *Star Wars*—the ultimate sci-fi classic, in my opinion—doesn't hold a candle to any of Harryhausen's efforts. If I remember correctly, *Star Wars* had no more than about 20 seconds of stop-motion animation (the chess game).

I know I speak for other Harryhausen fans around the world when I take issue with Trost. Ray is still the best!

Aris Hampers
Grand Rapids, MI

• Reviewer Trost says his use of the word "dated" was not meant to denigrate Harryhausen's past achievements, but rather to put the movie's style in perspective. There will long be viewers who prefer Harryhausen's techniques just as there are musical buffs who still prefer Busby Berkeley's "dated" style to that of Bob Fosse or Ken Russell.—Ed.

Correspondence addressed to Video Review is only answered in print in the Letters or Questions pages, space permitting. Sorry, no personal replies.



You'll love how it loads up front and how little it sets you back.

Thanks to Toshiba, you no longer have to be loaded to afford a VCR. In fact, for a reasonable amount of money, you can even get one that's loaded with features.

The new V-9200 with remote control.

What Toshiba's done is rethink the VCR from the top down. Literally.

Conventional top-loading has been replaced with a system that lets you slip cassettes in the front. So you can slip the machine itself into tight spaces without leaving any room overhead for loading.

For easier operation mechanically pre-set tuning has been dropped and replaced with a more advanced electronic tuner.

Which means the V-9200 can be programmed to record a ball game on one channel while you watch a movie on another.

We searched for ways to improve picture search. The result? The V-9200 not

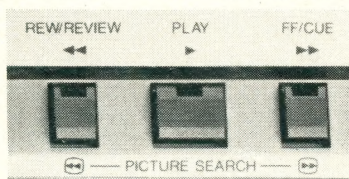
only makes quick visual searches at 8 times normal picture speed, but also very slow ones at

1/5 normal speed. Or even one frame at a time.

And auto-rewind has been added to cue whatever you've recorded back to start as soon as the tape is finished.

So you see, Toshiba has taken the VCR a giant step forward. Yet still managed to put the price in reverse.

A federal court has ruled that recording copyrighted material off the air without consent is in violation of existing copyright laws.



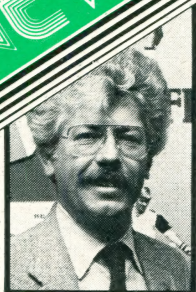
TOSHIBA

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Art Levis

□ **VIDEO WALKMAN:** Teeniest TV set so far is being introduced by Sony: wallet-size, black-and-white set with two-inch screen. New mini marvel is now on sale in Japan at about \$240. Company studying possibilities of selling it in US. Dimensions: 1¼" (D) x 3½" (W) x 7¾" (H).

Tiny size was made possible through new FDT (flat display tube) which is just ⅝ of an inch thick. Sony says using Walkman-type stereo headphones with it results in high-fidelity sound.

* * *

□ **AUTO VIDEO:** First automotive VCR system coming from Clarion, using new mini UCM (ultra compact machine) format, compatible with VHS. Three prototypes with 30 minute play/record time currently undergoing road tests. System scheduled for August introduction in Japan, Europe later in year. Meanwhile, Matsushita (Panasonic and Quasar in US) cruising into Japanese car business with three-piece component color TV system: chassis in trunk, control panel in dash, monitor facing rear seat.

* * *

□ **ITTY BITTY BETA:** Meanwhile, Beta-format originator Sony has developed its answer to JVC's UCM prototype. News from Japan is that Sony's "mini-Beta" VCR will be much smaller than existing Beta recorders, using tiny "mini-Beta" videocassettes that will be compatible with current Beta VCRs. Confirming Japanese rumor, source at Sony's US office says that while "mini-Beta" prototype could be shown within electronics industry by this fall, a consumer version may not appear for "maybe two or three years."

* * *

□ **GAMES GALORE:** Hottest new video game trend is introduction by new and established companies of cartridges compatible with Atari and Mattel Intellivision systems. Among latest entrants to join Activision in creating private-label cartridges: Imagic ("Star Voyager," "Demon Attack" and "Trick Shot" for Atari; Intellivision games to follow) and Coleco ("Donkey Kong," "Round-Up," "Vanguard," "Phoenix," "Mousetrap," "Venture" for both Atari and Intellivision).

* * *

□ **KING OF CLUBS:** LP record club pioneer—CBS—is applying same idea to video with planned sale-only cassette club through Columbia House. In plan similar to record club, new members get four tapes for two weeks, for \$1 plus shipping, handling charges. Members then have option of returning tapes or purchasing them at half price.

Other incentive to join club: Purchase of videotape at regular price entitles member to buy second tape of equal or lower price for \$12.95 to cover shipping and handling.

* * *

□ **BENNY AND THE CASSETTES:** The British are coming, at least to US video scene. Thames TV International is making many popular British TV imports (*The Benny Hill Show*, *Edward and Mrs. Simpson*, etc.) available on cassette here through deal with Thorn EMI. Eventually over 100 titles should be available, including *The World at War*, *The Naked Civil Servant*.

* * *

□ **FUNAI FRIENDS:** Quarter-inch (CVC) videotape format embraced by Technicolor is getting new US support, this time from Japan-based Elbex Corporation, exporter of commercial video-cameras, security systems. Company says it'll sell version of Funai-developed CVC system in US next fall. Grundig and Canon have also announced they'll sell CVC in US, though latest reports had Canon shifting to VHS format. Stay tuned.

* * *

□ **NIPPER NIPPED:** New York City retailer Trader Horn slashed prices on RCA CED-format videodisc player to \$269, including \$50 rebate. Bonus: "three discs free from RCA."

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ONE MILLION B.C.—starring Victor Mature and Lon Chaney Jr.

PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE—Bela Lugosi

ROCKETSHIP X-M—starring Lloyd Bridges and Osa Massen

SINBAD THE SAILOR—starring Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and Maureen O'Hara

SON OF KONG—starring Robert Armstrong

SPACE PATROL—VOLUME 1 and 2—starring Ed Kemmer

STRANGER FROM VENUS—starring Patricia Neal

TALES OF TOMORROW—VOLUME 1 and 2

THE THING—starring Kenneth Tobey and James Arness

TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET—VOLUME 1 and 2—starring Frankie Thomas

VAULT OF HORROR—starring Terry-Thomas and Curt Jurgens

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Illustration: David Klein

Not Fit to Print?

Under normal circumstances, we wouldn't judge this news to be worth a second thought: A recent article in *The New York Times* disclosed that the Amundsen-Scott science base near the South Pole has "an extensive videotape collection," consisting of such pictures as *The French Connection*, *Patton* and *M*A*S*H*."

After all, as the *Times* article documented, the acute isolation suffered by the crew of '79—16 men and one woman—apparently led to individual bouts of depression, boredom, paranoia and sexual frustration. Surely a well-stocked video library could help alleviate some of the crew's stress.

But then we began to wonder: *Patton* and *M*A*S*H*? Is the South Pole really rated PG?

Picking up where the *Times* left off, Freeze-Frames poked around in a DC phone book until we located a source—Mr. Eric Chary, project manager for the Scott base, US Department of Polar Programs.

After some preliminary slow-pitch questions about

how many tapes are at the base (between 50 and 100 Beta cassettes) and who procures them (a private contractor, I.T.T. Antarctic Services Inc., Paramus, NJ, rents the tapes for 18 months from a local vendor), we let loose a change-up: "This is a delicate question, Mr. Chary. But are there any X-rated tapes in the video library of the South Pole base?"

Long pause. "Oh, sure there are, quite a lot of them are," said Mr. Chary, adding, "Who did you say you were?"

We identified ourselves again and pressed on in our best Woodstein manner. "Well, do individuals bring the adult tapes with them, or is it the policy of the United States government to provide X-rated videotapes for

the crew's, ah, diversion?"

"The US government doesn't supply X-rated tapes," snapped Mr. Chary. "Individual staffers bring personal selections with them."

Patton and *M*A*S*H*, indeed. □

Don't Touch That Dial

There's a new device that grants parents electronic control over their children's viewing habits, called, appropriately, Censorview. The accessory, which may be attached to any TV set, can be programmed to block reception of any and all TV shows throughout the week deemed by parents to be unsuitable.

I wonder, though, if the idea of blacking out a noxious show isn't rather elementary, psychologically speaking. After all, isn't it only a matter of time before the negative reinforcement folks start thinking about the potential of a device that gently, oh so gently, punishes a child for watching the wrong program? All they would need is a black box, a microprocessor and a small electric-shock terminal disguised as a video-game joystick.

But that's as silly as a clockwork orange. □

Videocassette on The Mount

For the past five millenia, Jewish history has been passed on to succeeding generations by sopers. But now it seems the story of Judaism may be told with help from a more modern type of scribe—a video production team.

Last January, the Union of



Illustration: Jane Beaulieu

American Hebrew Congregations announced that it is establishing a \$25 million "television library of Judaism," the first of its kind in the world.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Organization for Reform Judaism, says the video resource center could eventually contain several thousand cassettes dealing with Jewish culture, history and religious practice, as well as interviews with major Jewish personalities. The programs will be available for use in synagogues, for purchase by individuals and for showings via satellite for cable TV stations.

The operation will be located uptown a ways from those lower east side storefronts where quiet men spend their days hunched over parchment scrolls. □

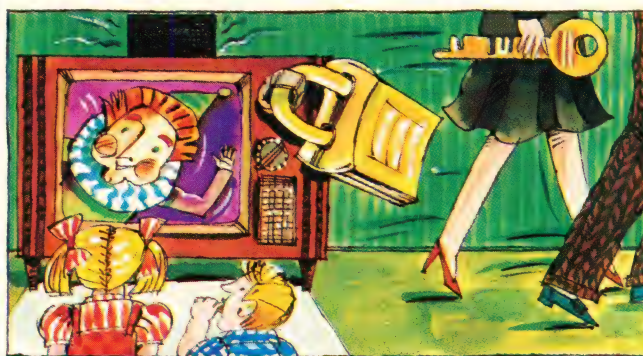


Illustration: Kris Boyd



Is Nothing Sacred?

The local video shutterbug isn't just shooting weddings, wills and bar mitzvahs anymore. In fact, according to a recent survey conducted by the *Wall Street Journal*, the Duddy Kravitz-type entrepreneurs of today are getting a slew of off-beat assignments.

Dynamic Video of Upland, CA, recently taped a myelogram procedure—in which dye is injected into the base of the spine—on behalf of the patient. Another California videotaper, Richard Zielinski, says he has taped kidney operations and heart transplants for curious patient/clients.

Funerals too seem to be pretty popular in small-business video. Gene Gordon Video of Tustin, CA, says he once shot the last rites of a motorcyclist. As part of the ceremony, 200 of the deceased's friends conducted a motorcycle procession behind the hearse. The parade of anguish, very neatly captured on tape, must have pleased Gordon's client—a lawyer build a negligence case on behalf of the dead man's family.

Perhaps even more jarring than a video funeral is the electronic "Dear John" message. Royal Color Portraits Inc. (Massapequa, NY), a veteran of the genre, says one woman, who spent several hours taping her message (Cut! take 73!) left the cassette in the spot her mate visited most frequently—the refrigerator. □

Gotta Have a Gimmick

The folks at Electric Blue, the (hard) R-rated, every-other-month videocassette periodical, might have run out of such news-breaking reports as "Long Dong Silver And His Arch Rival!", "Geriatric Whorehouses" and "The Nude Housewives Contest."

The company's current cassette (005), starring celebrity guest hostess Desiree Cousteau, features three 3D electronic centerfold girls. Cardboard glasses come free with each purchase.

While Electric Blue is busy extending the bounds of video programming for men (next on the agenda: scratch and sniff cassette boxes?), along comes Magnetic Video founder Andre Blay with his entry into the genre—another videocassette "magazine," *New Look*.

The premiere issue features centerfold-girl Tamara, who, according to her press agent, is "an incredibly beautiful ballet and



modern dancer who feels that dancing is 'just another way of making love.'"

Hit it, Doc—"Tamara, Tamara, we love ya, Tamara. You surely got Blay's okaaaaaaay." □

That Demon Video

Snuggled in a corner of New England, the vigilant town of West Warwick, RI, adopted an extraordinary

ordinance earlier this year. It bars children under the age of 16 from playing video games in public establishments, unless they're accompanied by adults. (A similar ordinance adopted by a municipality in Texas has been challenged and is now before the Supreme Court.)

At a recent West Warwick town meeting on the matter, Jinnette Cary, the mother of a 14-year-old girl, complained to the council, "You



are telling me as a parent that I have to be with my child at all times. I think that is unconstitutional."

At the very least it's a headache. □

Optic Doc's Warning

From the grove of academe known as Washington State University comes news that too much TV and video watching can cause not mental torpor, not homicidal tendencies, not sexual arousal of toddlers, but nearsightedness.

Dr. Francis Young, a research psychologist, disputes the classic medical opinion that nearsightedness, or myopia, is inherited. Too much close-quarters video watching, he concludes, can bring about long-standing changes in the eye that can cause one to see objects blurred at a distance.

To try to support his claim, Young says that incidents of

myopia have more than doubled in the past 50 years and predicts the condition may afflict half the US population by the end of the century. Still, I just can't see it. □

Ready Ratings

In the Maalox-happy world of network TV, some programming execs can't bear to wait till tomorrow to find out how their program fares on the tube tonight. Daily Nielsen ratings aren't for

these thoroughbreds. They want to know the bottom line before the first commercial break.

Well, the era of instant ratings may be upon us, thanks to Phil DeGuere, a computer hobbyist and producer of CBS's *Simon and Simon* (above).

DeGuere, a subscriber to The Source teletext database, last fall typed out a message on his computer and posted it on the system's electronic bulletin board. Very simply, he asked his database comrades to watch *Simon and Simon* and write him an electronic note telling him what they thought.

The first time, DeGuere's computer terminal received a couple hundred responses, all minutes after the show went off the air on the East Coast, allowing the entire staff to plow through the feedback—before the same episode aired on the West Coast.

Fast enough? □

See all you imagine.



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Incompatibility among Beta tapes?

I recently had cable TV installed in my home, and then I bought a VCR that comes equipped with a cable-ready tuner. Unfortunately, I discovered that the recorder wasn't able to tune in the premium channels—in my case, HBO and Showtime. What am I doing wrong? Is the cable company doing something with my reception to prevent me from taping these programs, or is my videocassette recorder defective?

Scott Severson
Mobile, AL

A A lot of cable-TV companies electronically scramble their pay-TV channels to prevent unauthorized customers from viewing them. As a result, if you connect a TV set or a VCR that has a midband and/or superband tuner, it can receive all the cable channels but won't be able to unscramble certain programs without a descrambler. This means that you really have no recourse except to get the channel-selector box/decoder supplied by your cable company.

On the other hand, if these premium channels aren't scrambled, and all you're picking up is "snow," chances are these channels have been "trapped out" (that is, removed with a special electronic filter) from your cable line. Call your cable company and have it send over a service representative to verify that your outside signal feed is properly hooked up. (If you're trying to pick up the pay channels without paying for them, shame on you!)

The engineering department of your cable company may be able to extend more assistance if its scrambling can be removed from your particular line in your neighborhood.

We sympathize with your problem of not being able to tune in every channel with your "cable-ready" tuner, which in this case wasn't completely "ready" after all. Of course, we also sympathize with the cable

companies, which have to prevent their signals from being pirated by nonsubscribers.

Q I read with interest your mention of a professional half-inch videocassette editor from Sony in a past issue. I've been using my VHS-format equipment to shoot weddings and parties locally as part of my photography company, and I'd like to



Panasonic's professional editor with flying erase heads.

know if there's any comparable equipment available in VHS.

Ken Grimwood
St. Louis, MO

A JVC and Panasonic both offer industrial VHS recorders and players capable of being used in "quasi-editing" setups. We say "quasi" because neither of these machines, the JVC BR-6400 nor the Panasonic NV-8200, are designed with "flying erase heads," which are a necessity for professional-quality editing.

Only with flying erase heads can you cleanly insert new material in the middle of an existing scene. They can allow you to salvage a bad camera shot, or slip in an extra reaction shot in a static scene to create more interest. As of presstime, only Sony's \$3,750 SLO-383 Beta deck has flying erase heads, but a Panasonic spokesperson has indicated that the company may in-

troduce a VHS editor for industrial use by mid-1982.

While only professional VCRs can yield professional-style results, you can sometimes get excellent assembly edits—adding one shot after another—with amateur recorders, depending on the design of the particular deck and the type of video heads with which it's equipped. In general, most VHS recorders with fair heads make better overall edits than those with two heads. Be forewarned that many current VHS models use a special technique called "backspace editing" to rewind the tape a little when the pause button is depressed during recording, for a smoother transition. This will make extremely accurate editing very difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, more and more half-inch recorders now come with "time-phase" circuits, which electronically line up the signals on the tape with those coming in from the source being recorded to create virtually glitch-free transitions.

Experiment with the videocassette recorders available at local video stores, and have the dealers suggest which models might be the best choice for your particular application. If they don't stock the industrial decks discussed above, try contacting a professional video dealer for more information.

Q I recently became concerned over a statement in an ad in my local newspaper which said that "any VCR, regardless of make or model, will need its heads replaced after 1,000 hours of use, at the staggering cost of \$150-300." Is this true?

Charles Pollack
Brooklyn, NY

A We've seen many VCRs reach as much as 2,000 or 3,000 hours of play over the course of more than three years before requiring head replacement. Most service representatives

from the major VCR companies advise that the total cost of video head replacement shouldn't be much more than \$200 for most machines, including parts and labor. If you get 2,000 hours of use out of your deck, this averages out to about 10 cents an hour, which isn't really such a high price to pay, in our opinion. There are exceptions, of course, when video heads may need replacement even sooner, depending on what kind of tape you use, what kind of climate you live in and how well you take care of your VCR. But 2,000 hours is a figure often given to us by experienced service reps.

The whole area of VCR maintenance is not a particularly easy one on which to make hard-and-fast rules, but it's apparent that the company that placed the ad may have bent the truth a little.

Q I was recently told by my local video retailer that a lot of movies and music tapes coming out in the next few months will be released in stereo, but only in the VHS format. He claims that no stereo Beta-format tapes will be coming out because there aren't any stereo Beta recorders yet. What's the problem? Why can't the tape companies make their prerecorded programs in stereo for all formats?

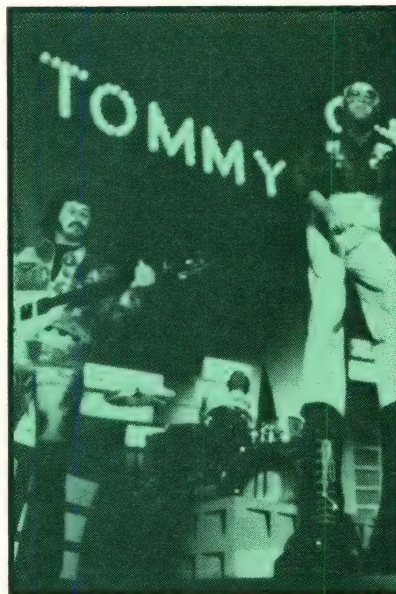
Larry Yeager
St. Petersburg, FL

A That's a good question. We talked to a spokesperson for Sony who explained that it's sort of a Catch-22 situation: Sony is reluctant to release stereo Beta decks because there isn't much stereo programming available (although there is more and more—even in the Beta format). Meanwhile, prerecorded tape and disc companies are reluctant to release many stereo Beta tapes because there are almost no stereo Beta VCRs here, save for two brand new models from Marantz.

They employ Dolby noise reduction, even though Sony has said its own future stereo VCRs will probably use a different, Sony-trade-mark noise-reduction system. So that opens up a whole new question about the compatibility of stereo tapes within the Beta format.

The spokesperson added that another important concern is improving the audio quality, which is noticeably worse with stereo recordings since their track widths are only half the size of monaural tracks. Most manufacturers plan on offering some kind of noise reduction with their stereo VCRs when they're available later on this year, which should at least help alleviate the hiss problem.

One more reason that stereo Beta tapes may be slow in coming is that few major duplicating companies are set up to record two-channel tapes of any kind, and those that are usually have equipment only for stereo VHS, again due to the lack of



Case of mono: Columbia offers Tommy in stereo VHS, mono Beta.

availability of stereo Beta recorders. It's expected that as demand increases this situation will improve, and most tapes (and videodiscs) sold will be available in stereo.

Q What's the best way to convince a studio to release specific programs? For the past two years, I've been writing to Columbia Pictures, Screen Gems, RCA, NBC and anyone else I can think of to try to get them to release (1) *The Monkees* TV series, (2) *The Monkees'* 1968 feature movie, *Head*, and (3) the group's 1969 TV special, *33 1/3 Revolutions Per Monkee*. All that I've been able to find out is that Columbia still holds the

rights to this material and that copies still exist.

David Gallagher
Carney's Point, NJ

A With the economic realities of prerecorded cassette sales the way they are, it's difficult to argue with most of the studios' reasoning that the most important titles to release are the ones that have the biggest chance of selling well to a mass audience.

While you and many others may think that *The Monkees'* TV shows are important, you've got to agree that their appeal is fairly limited.

On the more positive side, you'll be pleased to know that *Head* has been shown on pay TV. It was recently well received on LA's Z Channel, and should be coming up on other US stations.

Q I presently own a Panasonic PV-1750, which used to be the company's top-of-the line model until the new model 1770 with wireless remote control was introduced.

I'd like to know if my recorder could be modified to include this infrared remote feature, which would help me get rid of that bothersome cord.

Tom Youts
Chicago, IL

A Well, we have bad news for you: This kind of modification is about as feasible as updating a 1981 car into a 1982 model, meaning that it can be done, but it's hardly worth the time and money involved. You'd probably be better off trading in your old machine for a new one.

If the problem you experience has to do with the fact that your remote cable is stretched all the way across the room, we have one solution for you. For a nominal fee, your local retailer should be able to come up with a way to rig up a lengthy extension cable that will allow you to run the cable alongside the wall all the way across the room to your viewing position, tucking the cable away from stumbling feet or small children. This kind of modification is easily accomplished, and will cost less than either trading in your machine for a new one or modifying your old one. □

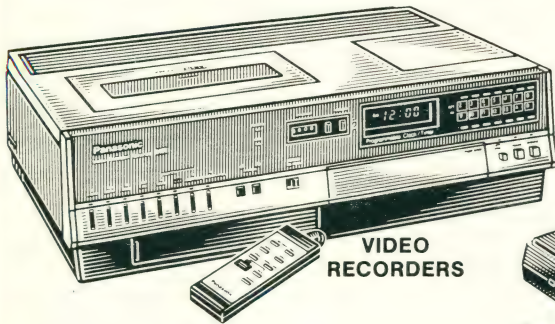
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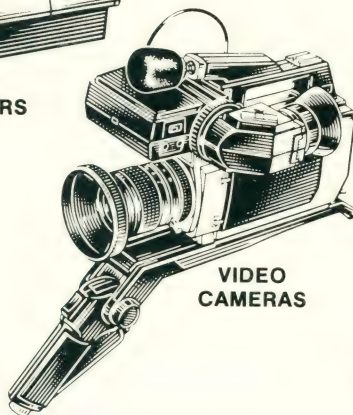
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RECORDERS



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RECORDERS



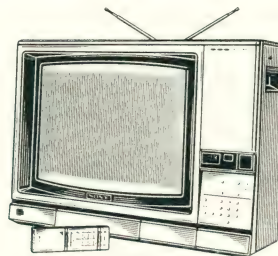
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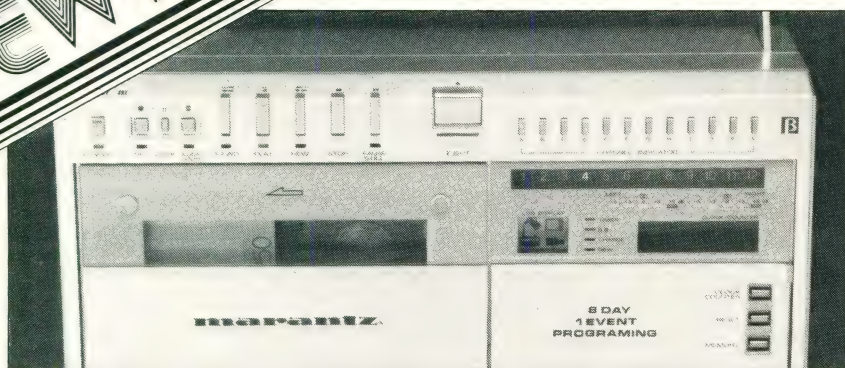
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MARANTZ Videocassette Recorder Model VR-100 \$1,450

The first stereo Beta-format VCRs are among the first video equipment from Marantz, a well-known manufacturer of audio equipment. This portable model and a comparable VR-200 one-piece model (\$1,350 suggested retail price) are also the first to offer Dolby C noise

reduction circuitry. Although no prerecorded cassettes so far utilize Dolby C, home videotapers can use it to achieve about a 20-decibel noise reduction.

The front-loading VCR has a built-in tuner and separate tuner/timer, and is styled in gold to match the company's audio components.

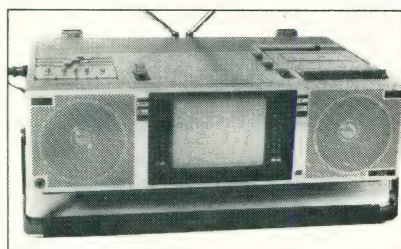
Marantz, 20525 Nordhoff St., Chatsworth, CA 91311 (213) 998-9333

ODYSSEY²

Video Game Cartridge The Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt \$49.95

"Rollover" and play Rockefeller. As news headlines flash across the TV screen, one or more players can invest in stocks, bonds, gold, Treasury bills and real estate. Savvy buying and selling can either put you in the (computer) chips or wipe out your fictional fortune. Compatible only with Odyssey² consoles.

Odyssey², NAP Consumer Electronics, Interstate 40 and Straw Plains Pike, Knoxville, TN 37914 (615) 521-4316



JVC Mini-Combo Model CX-710 \$699.95

This portable combo includes a color TV set, an AM/FM stereo radio and a stereo audiocassette recorder that can play metal tapes as well as standard ones. Connecting a VCR's video output turns the color TV, with its five-inch (diagonally measured) screen, into a video monitor.

Each of the twin speakers measures four inches across, and two built-in microphones and a mike-mixing control offer live stereo recording. The mini-combo can run on 10 (type-A) batteries, household current, an optional battery pack or a car/boat battery.

JVC, 41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407 (201) 794-3900

AUDIO-TECHNICA Video Head Cleaners

Video Cleanica AT5002 \$21.95
Video Cleanica AT5001 \$24.95

Two sides may be better than one, so both sides of the tape in these head-cleaning cassettes are coated with non-abrasive cleaner. Designed to clean rollers and tape guides as well as video heads, the Beta- and VHS-format cassettes are among the first video accessories from Audio-Technica, a prominent audio-accessory manufacturer.

Audio-Technica, 1221 Commerce Drive, Stow, OH 44224 (216) 686-2600



FUJI Blank Videocassettes

Super HG T-20, T-30, T-40, T-60,
T-80, T-100, T-120 \$23.35 to \$37

Super high-grade is Fuji's designation for blank tape a step up from high- and standard-grade. The company's VHS-format Super HG tape provides a video signal-to-noise ratio



that's four decibels better than standard-grade tape, according to Fuji. It's also designed for greater durability and improved audio response.

Fuji, 350 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10118 (212) 736-3335

Unless otherwise noted, all New Products specifications are manufacturers' data—not results of Video Review tests or measurements. All listed prices are manufacturers' suggested retail. Availability of products varies according to supply and locality.



MATTEL
Voice Synthesis Module
Intellivoice \$70 to \$80

This plug-in module gives the Intellivision video-game console not only a voice, but several—male and female. Computer-generated voices introduce the new "Space Spartans," "Bomb Squad" and "B-17 Bomber" video games, offer strategic advice, warn of imminent danger and cheer winners. The voices' emotional timbre ranges from "calm reassurance" to "alarm," according to Mattel.

The company expects to eventually expand the module's uses beyond video-game play.

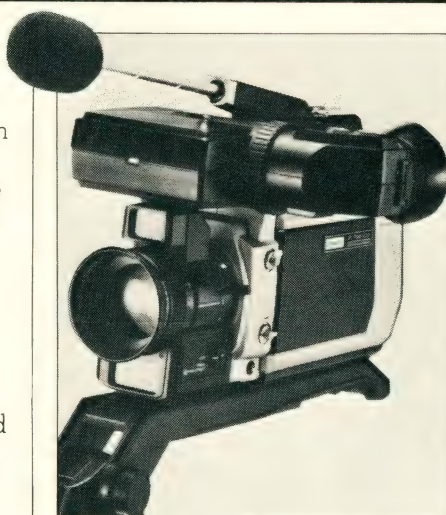
Mattel Electronics, 5150 Rosecrans Ave., Hawthorne, CA 90250 (213) 978-5150

PANASONIC
Videocamera
Model PK-805 \$1,200

Virtually everything's automatic on this full-featured videocamera, including the focus, iris, white balance and brightness controls. There's also an *f* 1.4 lens with two-speed, 6:1 power zoom, a fade-in/out control, an electronic viewfinder and a flashing light to let subjects know when they're being taped.

Its $\frac{2}{3}$ -inch Saticon image-pickup tube is designed for reduced lag and low-light sensitivity.

Panasonic, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094 (201) 348-7000

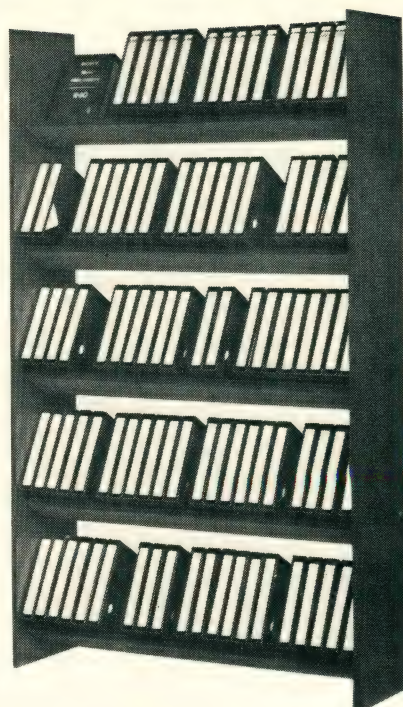


VISUAL BUILDERS
Video Furniture
Model 5-120 \$79.20

Tape titles are easy to read when they're stored on these tilted shelves. You can fit up to 120 Beta and VHS cassettes in the unit, which stands about 4½ feet high.

It comes ready for assembly, with pre-drilled holes and 12 screws. The shelves are finished in walnut-look woodgrain.

Visual Builders, 4435 Trias St., San Diego, CA 92103 (714) 296-4435



SONY
Digital Audio Processor
Model PCM-F1 \$1,900

Now you can keep your finger on the pulse-code modulator of the times. This accessory can turn any Beta- or VHS-format VCR into a high-quality, half-inch audiotape recorder. It converts analog audio signals to digital with its computer-processed system.

One of the smallest and lightest of such devices for the home user, this stereo-capable pulse-code modulator has an LED peak program meter and audio-level controls.

Sony, 9 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019 (212) 371-5800

QUASAR
Videocassette Recorder
Model VH5021TW \$875

Even though this is one of Quasar's less expensive VCRs, it still comes with forward visual scan.

Other features on the two/four/six-hour VCR include freeze-frame and

single-frame advance in the six-hour mode. The top-loading, VHS-format videocassette recorder comes with a 24-hour/one-event timer. It receives VHF channels 2-13 and UHF channels 14-83.

Quasar, 9401 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park, IL 60131 (312) 451-1200



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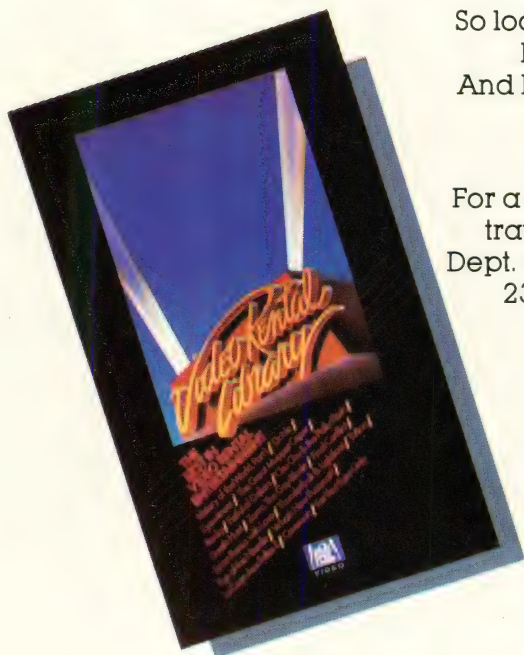
Titles like the sensational **Rocky**, Mel Brooks' hilarious **History of the World Part I**, and the spy thriller **Eye of the Needle**. James

Bond fans will love **For Your Eyes Only** and **Dr. No**. And the whole family will delight in **The Great Muppet Caper**. There are also current features like **Zorro The Gay Blade**, **Eyewitness** and **La Cage Aux Folles II**.

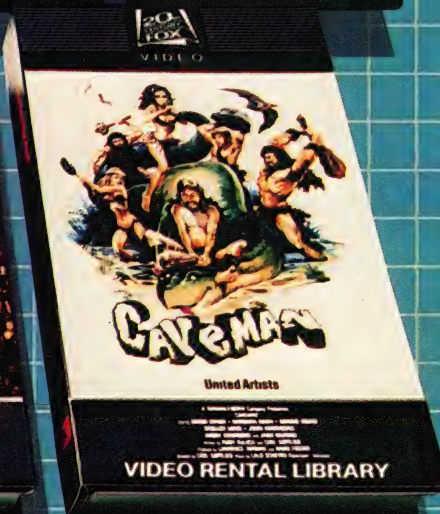
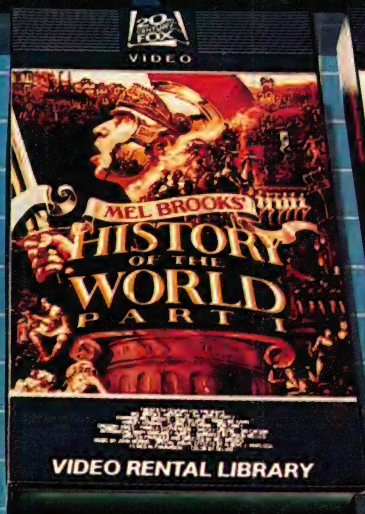
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Farmington Hills,
MI 48024.



FOR Rent



In-depth lab tests of latest video products

Fig. 1.



A 'black box' for dubbing tapes

resolution and detail definition. This Showtime Video Ventures device, though, is the first to deal just with the color loss that occurs when you make second generation tapes.

This attractively packaged little device measures only 3¼ inches high by 4½ inches wide by eight inches deep and weighs a bit under two pounds. Power consumption is a mere four watts.

The "luminance" or brightness portion of a standard NTSC video signal occupies a band of frequencies that is distinct from the "chrominance" or color portion of that composite signal. Colors to be reproduced in any video picture are a function both of the amplitude of the color "burst" signal and of the phase or "time" relationships of that chrominance signal, so it's possible to electronically alter these color-signal parameters. In fact, you do this every time you adjust the hue and color controls on your TV set. A TV station engineer makes such adjustments while monitoring broadcasts. But until now, video fans couldn't exert the same kind of control over home equipment.

The front panel has five controls. On the upper left control is a "luma" that affects



Fig. 2a.



Fig. 2b.



Fig. 2c.

Burst phase response adjusted correctly (left), counterclockwise (middle) and clockwise (right).

About These Test Reports

Before evaluating any equipment test report, it's fair to ask: Who's doing the testing? What test equipment do they have?

CBS Technology Center tests home video equipment exclusively for Video Review. The CBS Technology Center is a world-renowned, multimillion-dollar testing facility staffed by many of the nation's top video engineering experts.

Video Review's Technical Editor Len Feldman, who evaluates the data with hands-on use tests, is an internationally recognized authority with more than 20 years' experience in testing home-entertainment products. The combina-

tion of CBS and Feldman is your guarantee of the best video equipment test reports available anywhere.

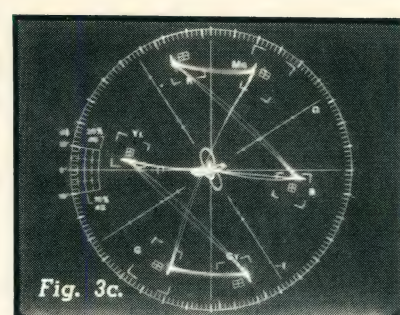
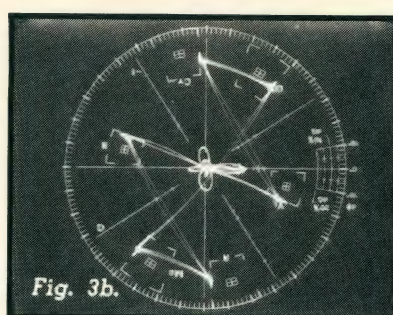
SHOWTIME VIDEO VENTURES Color Processor Model VV777P

When some video fans talk about a generation gap, they aren't necessarily thinking of their kids. They're referring to a problem that occurs when they try to "dub" a videotape from one VCR to another. Companies are beginning to come to the aid of video aficionados by offering equipment based on the type of gear professional studios use, such as image enhancers for improving image

overall picture brightness. You adjust this control even before you attempt to correct color imbalances, bypassing with the color correction circuitry.

Two "color saturation" controls nearby are called the "chroma" and "burst amp" controls. The chroma control alters the level or amplitude of the color subcarrier, thereby altering the degree of color intensity. The burst amp control alters the level of the chroma burst portion of the composite video signal without affecting the color subcarrier signal itself. You adjust this for the sharpest picture resolution and skin tone. Burst amp adjustments usually require corresponding chroma control readjustments, since they're interrelated.

The "burst phase" control at the lower



Burst Amp response adjusted for normal (left), maximum (middle) and minimal (right) gain.

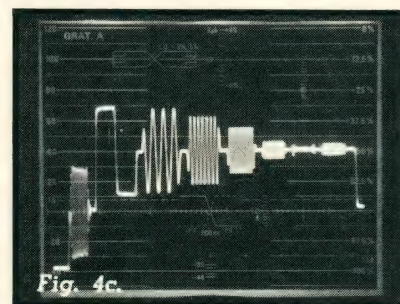
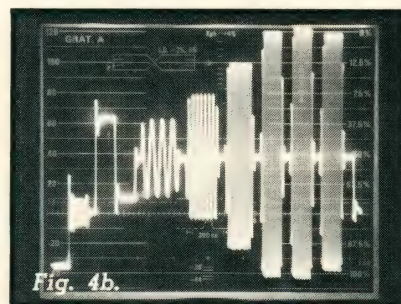
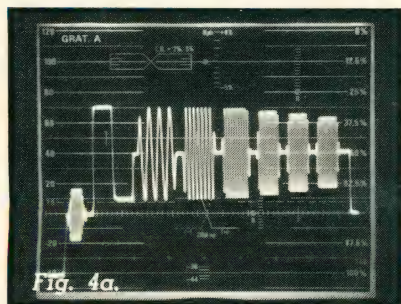
right of the panel actually alters or shifts colors. A quarter turn counterclockwise of the burst phase control from its normal position will shift reds toward blue, blues toward green and greens toward red. Conversely, a quarter turn clockwise of this control will shift reds toward green, greens toward blue and blues toward red. Naturally, all secondary and complementary colors undergo similar phase changes.

The fifth control on the color processor's front panel is the "selector" switch. It has a "color" position for full color processing of video signals, a "bypass" position for comparing unprocessed video signals with processed ones and a "mono" position for processing either black-and-white (monochrome) signals, or for treating color video signals as monochrome-only signals. The selector switch also turns off power to the color processor.

Lab Tests

Quantitative measurements for a device such as the color processor would really not tell us very much, since there's no basis for comparison. Instead, we applied the various test signals which we normally use in evaluating a VCR, with controls adjusted to various settings. We observed the resulting output signals in relation to their effects upon overall color reproduction and color accuracy.

We first applied our usual frequency response burst signal and observed it with the selector switch in the bypass position (fig. 4a). Under these conditions, all burst amplitudes from .5 MHz to 4.2 MHz were approximately the same, as they should be in a "perfect" transmission. The tone burst second from right is the all-important color-carrier frequency of 3.58 MHz.



Multiburst frequency response, with selector in the Bypass position (left), in the Color position with chroma increased to near maximum (middle) and on Mono (right).

With the selector switch now moved to color and the chroma control increased to near maximum, the 3.58 MHz burst is seen to increase in amplitude substantially (fig. 4b). We then set the selector switch at mono (fig. 4c), to entirely suppress any color signals and, sure enough, we observed a complete attenuation of the 3.58 tone burst, with far less attenuation of frequencies on either side of that frequency.

We used our standard staircase linearity signal to check the luma control. It's one thing to be able to vary brightness of a video picture, but we wouldn't want to gain that flexibility if it meant losing linearity of brightness, with picture details varying from black, through shades of gray, to white. Fortunately, adjustment of the luma control from its normal setting to its maximum setting resulted in virtually no change in staircase linearity.

Our next set of tests used our standard color-bar test signal. First, the color bar signal was displayed on a color vectorscope to show the "ideal" with all vectors perfectly centered in the vectorscope display. We then investigated the effects of varying the burst amp control (figs. 3a,b,c), and we noted that in addition to varying amplitude of the color burst signal, this control does introduce some phase shift, but this slight distortion can be easily compensated for by using the burst phase control.

Starting with the burst phase control adjusted for proper phase (correct colors in the color bar pattern when viewed on a TV monitor, as in fig. 2a), we observed the effects of varying this control both on a TV monitor (to observe actual color shift) and on the vectorscope. Optimum adjustment of the burst phase control yields not only

an optimum color display but, as you might expect, an optimum presentation on the vectorscope.

When we turned the burst phase control counterclockwise, the red color bar on the monitor shifted toward blue, blue shifted toward green and green shifted toward red (fig. 2b). The corresponding color vectors have been shifted by approximately 45 degrees, clockwise. With the burst phase control adjusted in the opposite direction, the red color bar shifted toward green, green shifted toward blue and blue toward red (fig. 2c). Again, the color vectors as seen on the vectorscope have been shifted correspondingly, this time approximately 55 degrees counterclockwise.

The final test involved the use of the chroma control. First, we applied a video signal with low chroma to the color processor and examined it in terms of its vectorscope display. By increasing the setting of the chroma control on the color processor, amplitude of the chroma signal was restored to its correct level.

Summary

The luma amplifier provides up to 4 dB of gain. That means you can actually alter a video signal so that it's brighter than it would otherwise be, restoring whatever losses in brightness that have occurred during dubbing or any other processing of a video program.

The color processor can be a very useful add-on for serious video enthusiasts. It provides home practitioners with many of the color fine-tuning abilities previously available only to broadcast TV technicians and engineers. It's simple to connect and to use, and not out of line in terms of its price. (\$337). (L.F.)□

Specialized antenna from Archer

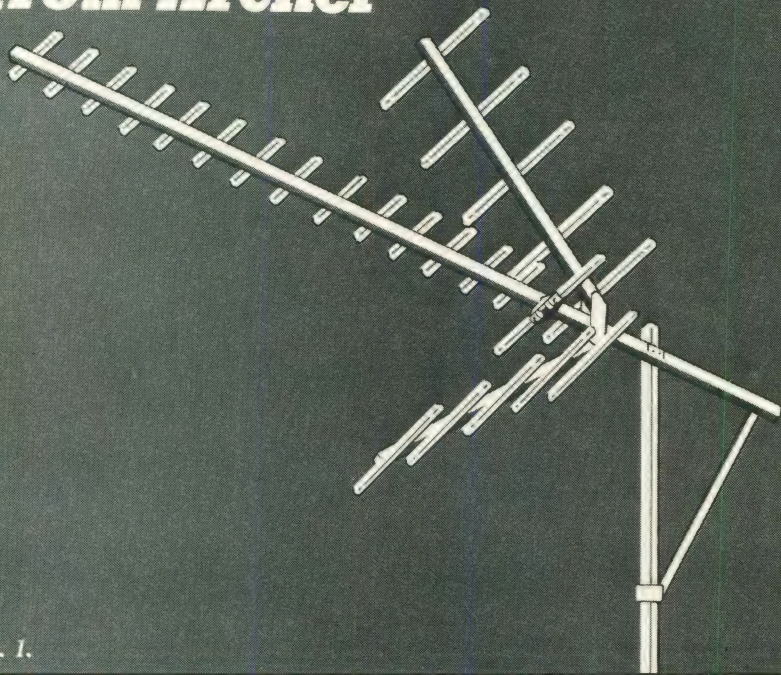


Fig. 1.

ARCHER UHF TV Antenna Model U-100

As video makes more and more TV viewers—and especially *tapers*—increasingly critical of picture quality, high-quality antennas are becoming progressively important.

There are many areas around the country where videotapers are unable to receive good UHF TV reception. These situations demand the use of a UHF-only outdoor antenna, such as this Archer model sold by Radio Shack, that's called a "corner reflector Yagi" type.

We tested this UHF antenna at CBS Technology Center, located in Stamford, Connecticut, some 35 air miles from the transmitting antennas of most of New York City's VHF and UHF TV stations. We mounted a "source" antenna, capable of transmitting a pulse signal that's the equivalent of a transmitted signal, on the roof of the laboratory. The Archer model U-100 antenna to be tested was mounted on a testing tower, some 75 feet above ground level and about 400 feet from the source antenna.

As a rule, an antenna that has many separate parallel elements or rods is one that is highly directional. That is, it's more sensitive to signals arriving perpendicular to its active elements than to those signals arriving from other angles. This is important in the rejection of delayed or reflected signals which can cause "ghosts" or after-images on your TV set. A high degree of directionality usually goes hand-in-hand with higher "gain." When we speak of "gain" with respect to any antenna, we

must refer that gain figure (in decibels, or dB) to some arbitrary "0 dB" gain figure. In this case, we used that of a simple standard half-wave dipole. That's an antenna which has a pair of rods extending from a center point, cut to a specific length for a given channel frequency for which it was designed. "Forward gain" refers to the gain obtained when the elements of the antenna under test are pointing right toward our signal source.

Polar Patterns

These measurements tell us several things about an antenna. In the case of the Archer U-100, we plotted its polar pattern for three UHF channel frequencies: channel 21 (512 to 518 MHz), channel 30 (566 to 572 MHz) and channel 41 (632 to 638 MHz). Basically, in plotting a polar pattern, we rotate the antenna, while a turntable in the lab makes a corresponding turn, with a needle recording signal strength and directionality. Higher signal strengths are represented by greater distances from the center of the diagram. A complete 360° plot constitutes a total polar diagram.

The forward gain of the U-100 UHF antenna was 9 dB for channel 21 (fig. 3a), 10 dB for channel 30 (fig. 3b) and 9 dB for channel 41 (fig. 3c), indicating good consistency and excellent bandwidth across that major portion of the UHF TV band. The polar patterns also enable us to read the "beamwidth" or directionality of the antenna under test. Beamwidth, in this case, is defined as the frontal radiation angle of the antenna measured out to each half-power point (the point at which

gain drops by 3 dB compared with on-axis, or 0°, frontal gain).

Beamwidth seemed to become narrower as we measured at higher and higher UHF frequencies. It was 50° for channel 21 frequencies, 45° for channel 30 frequencies and 37° for channel 41 frequencies. Generally speaking, a narrow beamwidth is desirable if you live in an area where all signals originate from approximately the same direction. Such narrow beamwidth aids in eliminating the "ghosts" we mentioned earlier. On the other hand, if you live in an area where signals reach you from many angles, too directional an antenna may cause reception problems which you can only solve by adding a motorized antenna rotator so that you can aim it.

Normally, a simple dipole antenna receives signals equally well from in front as from behind its elements. Directional antennas such as this one, on the other hand, are designed to pick up signals arriving from the front and to reject signals coming from behind the antenna elements. The ratio of the signal gain between the frontal lobe (0° in our polar plots) and the signal coming from the rear (180° in the plots of figs. 3a,b,c) is known as the front-to-back ratio. In this case, the front-to-back ratio measured 16 dB for channel 21 frequencies, 15.5 dB for channel 30 and channel 41 frequencies. These results again indicate excellence in uniformity across the frequency band.

Ideally, there should be a perfect "impedance match" between a TV antenna/transmission line combination and the antenna input circuit of the TV receiver to which it's connected. With a perfect impedance match, maximum signal power will be transferred from antenna to

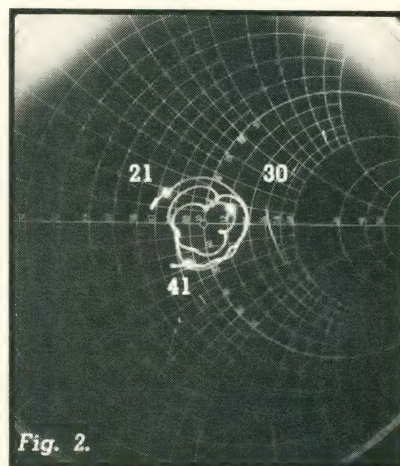
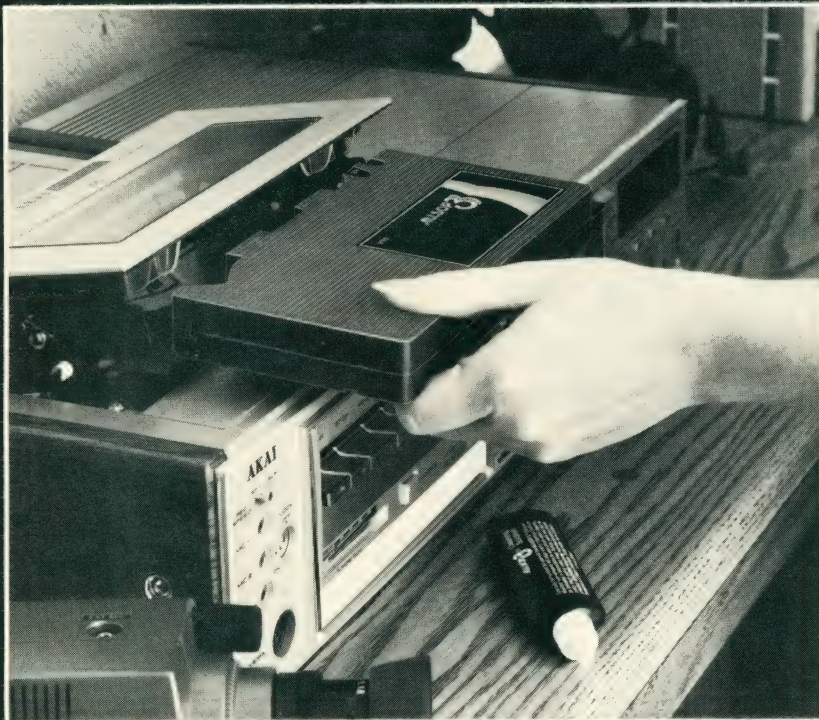


Fig. 2.

Display indicates the antenna's accuracy by measuring impedance.

receiver and the TV set will deliver its best picture and sound, consistent with the signal strength available at the receiving site. In actual practice, such a "perfect impedance match" seldom exists—and when it does, it's limited to a narrow range of frequencies, rather than extending across the



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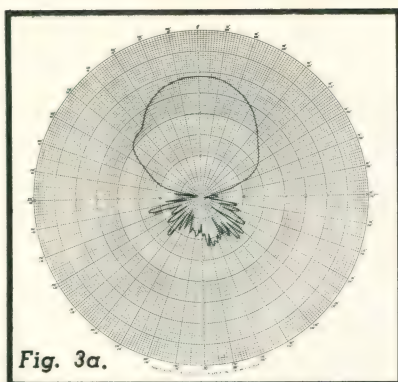


Fig. 3a.

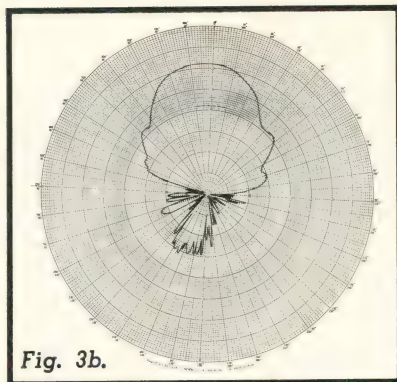


Fig. 3b.

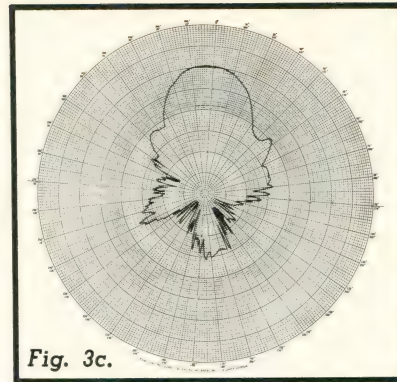
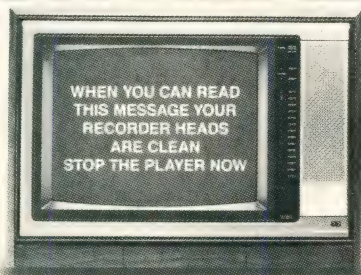


Fig. 3c.

Polar patterns indicate the strength of the signals as picked up by the antenna, and the antenna's directionality, for channels 21 (left), 30 (middle) and 41 (right).

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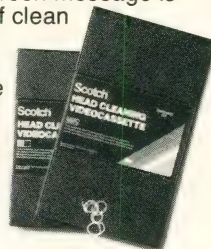
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entire band. The impedance values for the U-100 antenna were tabulated for channels 21, 30 and 41 and consist of a resistive component (225 ohms for channel 21, for example) and a reactive component, preceded by the letter "j" (j55 ohms inductive reactance, in the case of channel 21). It is to the credit of the designers of this antenna that the purely resistive components of the impedance at each of the three frequencies checked were relatively close to the "ideal" 300 ohm figure, and the amount of reactive impedance in each case was small.

To measure the accuracy of an antenna, we use a display (fig. 2) with a readout called a Smith Chart. The bright dots in the photo show the impedance values for the identified channels. A purely resistive value will appear as a bright dot along a center line running horizontally across the diameter of the display. If the dot appears above the horizontal diameter, an inductive component of impedance is present, while for a dot appearing below the center line, a capacitive reactive component is present in addition to the desired resistive component of impedance.

The final measurement we made is called the standing wave ratio. The lower the number the better, since a high standing wave ratio means that signals are traveling up and down the transmission line and signal energy is being lost instead of being transferred in its entirety to the receiver's circuitry. For the channel 21 frequencies, the standing wave ratio was 1.5; for channel 30 it measured 1.2 and for channel 41 it was 1.5. These readings are all in the acceptable range.

Summary

This antenna's gain and directional characteristics were extremely good, making it suitable for use as a "fringe area" UHF antenna or for installation at any receiving site where UHF reception has been something less than satisfactory with less elaborate antenna arrays.

The good results of these tests and measurements suggest that despite its relatively low cost, this antenna is well designed for receiving TV signals in the UHF frequency band. (L.F.)□

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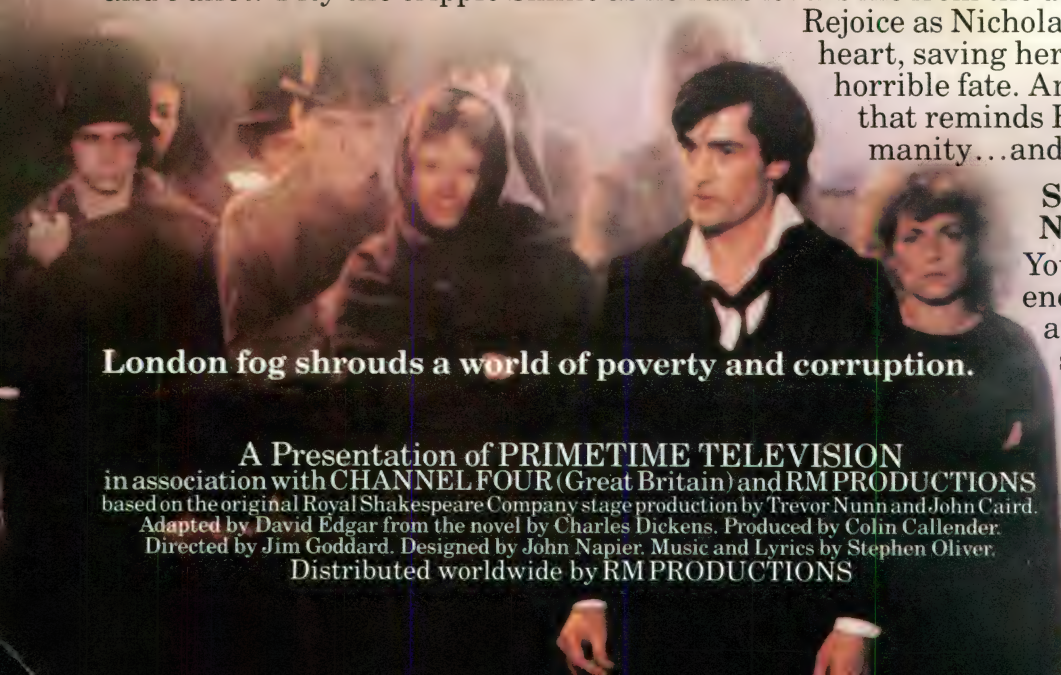
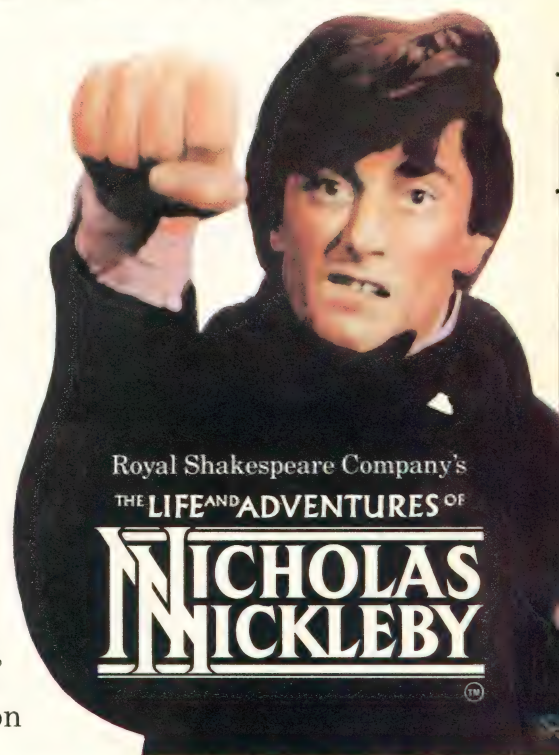
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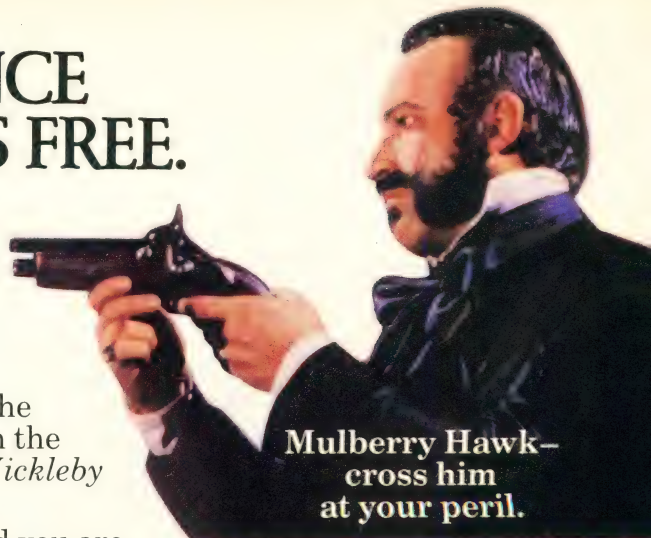
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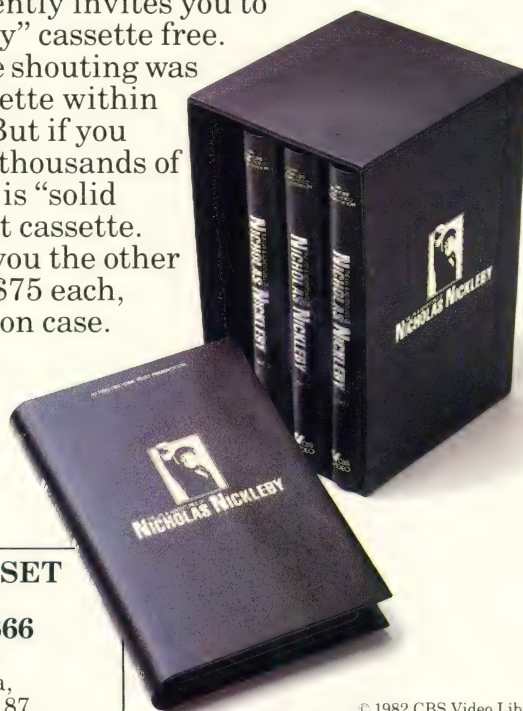
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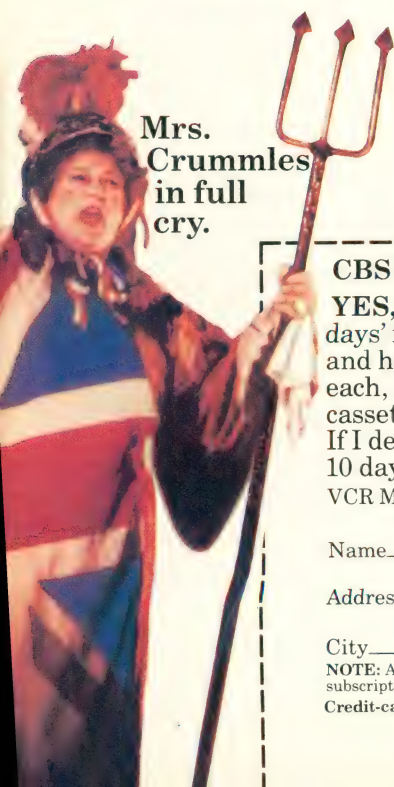
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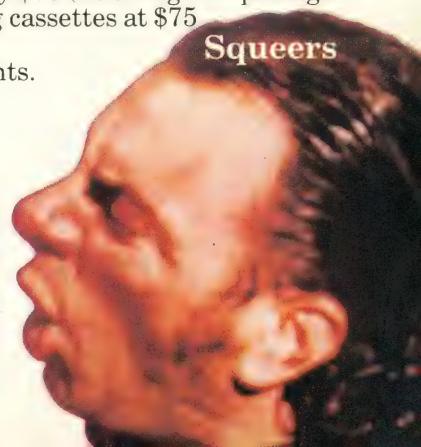
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J.C. PENNEY
Color Videocamera
Model 686-5312

This small, relatively lightweight color videocamera sold by the nationwide J.C. Penney chain has just about all the standard features video enthusiasts expect from a top-of-the-line camera.

The camera features a $\frac{2}{3}$ -inch, integral stripe filter, Vidicon tube and a completely electronic viewfinder which, besides letting you see what the camera lens "sees," also contains LED indicators for "white balance," for insufficient light and for the playing status of the tape. You can also watch a replay of the tape through the viewfinder (albeit in black-and-white) while videotaping on location.

Other features of the camera include a power zoom lens with a "macro" (ultra close-up) setting, automatic iris and white balance controls, a boom microphone, a standby switch (for saving battery power when the VCR is in the "pause" mode for extended time periods), an automatic gain control (AGC) switch for operating in low-light conditions and a "fader" switch which automatically produces professional looking fade-ins and fade-outs.

The cable attached to the camera has a 10-pin connector compatible with most camera sockets on VHS-format VCRs. It can also be powered with an optional power supply/camera AC adaptor (model 686-6024) if your VCR's camera socket doesn't match the plug on this camera.

Control Layout

You can attach the electronic viewfinder to the camera body easily and for comfort whether you're right- or left-handed. A rotatable eyepiece and a switch for inverting the video image inside the viewfinder accommodate both the left- and right-handed. One switch atop the viewfinder controls the power zoom and a second switch controls the zoom's rate of speed. Three pause switches (for stopping and starting the tape in the VCR) are conveniently located on the electronic viewfinder, beneath the lens on the camera body, as well as on the trigger grip. A red light at the front of the viewfinder, facing the subjects being videotaped, goes on when recording is in progress.

The left side of the camera contains an indoor/outdoor color temperature switch plus an auto/manual iris switch (fig. 2). The front of the camera, below the lens, has a tiny white balance control switch for adjusting white balance after the indoor/outdoor switch has been appropriately set. Once you've adjusted the white balance correctly, an LED, visible in the electronic viewfinder, glows green.

Controls on the rear of the camera include a fade-out on/off switch. When you set the fade-out switch, it automatically fades in or out when you press or release the pause controls. In fact, when the fader

Up-to-date color camera

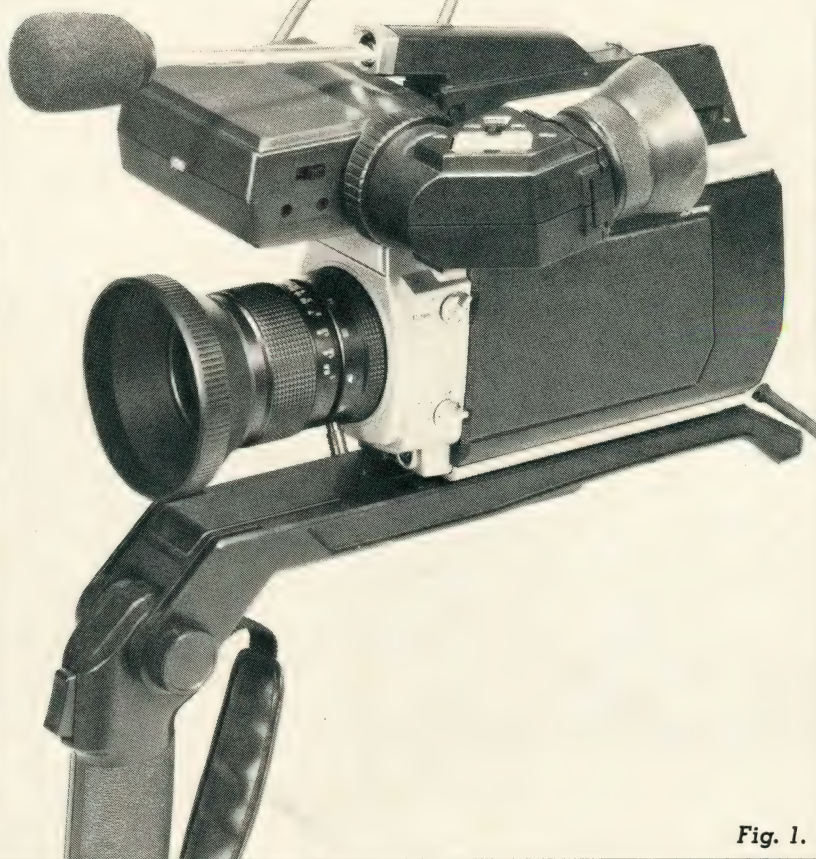


Fig. 1.

SPECIFICATION CHART

Manufacturer: **J.C. PENNEY** Product: **COLOR VIDEOCAMERA**
 Model No.: **686-5312** Serial No: **HIWA10233**

SPECIFICATION	MFR'S LISTING	VR MEASURED OR COMMENTS
VIDEO SECTION		
Min. Illumination	8 Footcandles	10 Footcandles
Horizontal Resolution	240 Lines	240 Lines
White Balance		12 IRE
Color Contamination		28 IRE
Minimum Focal Distance		2 Feet 4 Inches (2 Inches, Macro)
Signal-to-Noise Ratios Red-Field Chroma, AM Luminance (50 IRE Ref.)	43 dB	33 dB 38 dB
Lens Aperture	f1.6	Confirmed
Zoom Ratio	6:1	Confirmed
Focal Length	12 to 72 mm	Confirmed
AUDIO SECTION		
Max. Output, Microphone		1.9 Volts
Ext. Mike Sensitivity		2 mVolts
ADDITIONAL DATA		
Power Requirements	14 Watts	14.5 Watts
Cable Length Supplied	7 Feet	6 Feet 8 Inches
Weight	6.1 Pounds	7 Pounds
Dimensions (HxWxD, in inches)	8x7x13	Confirmed

Suggested Retail Price: \$799

switch is on and you press a pause button, the tape will continue to run until a full fade-out has been completed. The aforementioned AGC switch for increasing camera gain—at the expense of some signal-to-noise degradation—is also on the back of the camera. Nearby is a calibrated blue/red color adjuster for fine-tuning color accuracy during videotaping if you're using a color TV set or monitor. Also on the back are a standby/operate switch and a jack for connecting an external microphone. Connecting a microphone to this jack will automatically disconnect the built-in boom mike.

Measured minimum illumination for ac-

ceptable videotaping with this camera was 10 footcandles as opposed to the eight footcandles claimed, though that's fairly close. Of course, as is true of all color videocameras, for optimum taping, illumination should be about eight to 10 times the minimum, or, in this case, around 90 footcandles, as recommended by the manufacturer.

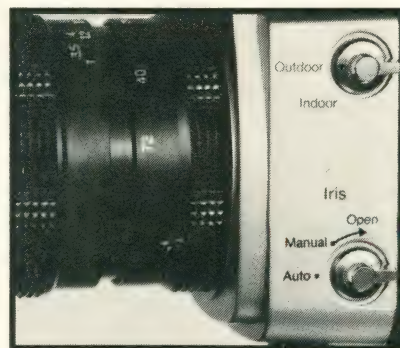
The camera's best feature (among its many good attributes) was its ability to reproduce all of the colors in our color test chart. White balance measured an acceptable 12 IRE, about average for cameras of this type, but color contamination (measured by the appearance of color

bursts on a black-and-white test pattern) was rather too high, with a reading of 28 IRE. Some cameras we've tested produced figures as low as 5 IRE for this measurement. The signal-to-noise ratio, measured with respect to red-field chroma, was only 33 dB (AM modulation with a bandwidth extending from 100 kHz to 500 kHz), while signal-to-noise ratio with reference to a brightness level of 50 IRE was about average, with a reading of 38 dB.

On the plus side, we noted that the camera was not subject to "smear," or prior image retention, to any discernible degree. Some degree of streaking was noted during fast pans with the camera, but we did not regard this as a serious failing. Horizontal resolution measured a very good 240 lines, exactly as claimed by the manufacturer.

Audio Measurements

Maximum output from the built-in microphone/preamp combination measured 1.9 volts. Using an external microphone, we measured an input sen-



Close-up of the color temperature (above) and iris controls.

sitivity of 2 millivolts—about normal for such mike inputs. Signal-to-noise (referred to a maximum output level), though not the highest we have measured for the audio section of a videocamera, was nevertheless an excellent 63 dB, which is far better than the signal-to-noise ratios of nearly any VCR you're likely to play your tape on.

Summary

This J.C. Penney color videocamera is a delight to use. Once properly focused (preferably with the zoom adjusted for maximum telephoto effect), it remains in focus throughout the "zoom" range of the lens. With white balance control properly adjusted for a given scene, we found that color accuracy was excellent and we rarely needed to alter the red-blue setting beyond its midpoint.

Our only disappointment with the camera was its poor chroma signal-to-noise ratio. On an overall basis, however, the camera offers better-than-average performance and a good range of features for its price. (L.F.)□

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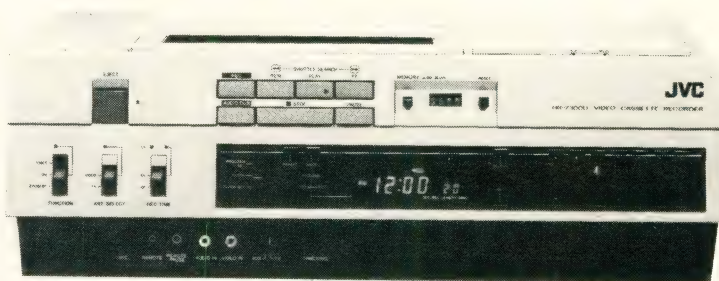
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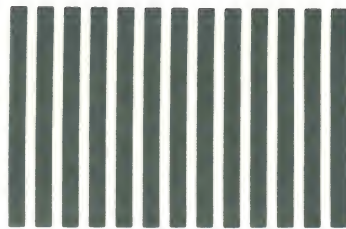
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Sears' latest Beta recorder

SEARS Videocassette Recorder Model 562.53220150

The introduction by Sears of a top-of-the-line VCR at a reasonable price could mean that video will now begin to reach a wider audience. And the fact that this one-piece, Beta-format VCR is pretty good for the money can only help.

All the special playback features of top VCRs are incorporated in this moderately priced model. These include practically noise-free freeze-frame (in Beta III only) and slow-motion playback, two-speed visual scan (at roughly 10- and 30-times-normal speed), automatic rewind when the tape reaches the end of play, 14-day programming of up to eight different events and automatic location of the beginning of each separate recorded event without having to reset the memory counter. In addition, a remote control, supplied at no extra cost, allows you to activate seven modes of operation (stop, play, reverse search, forward search, double-speed play, pause/freeze-frame and variable slow motion) from the comfort of your chair.

Control Layout

This Sears VCR has light-touch controls rather than the piano-key type. Located just in front of the cassette compartment, these include an eject button, and rewind, stop, fast forward, pause/freeze-frame, audio dub, record, reverse scan, play and forward scan buttons. Touching either of the scan buttons increases viewing speed to 10 times normal. By keeping the button depressed the scan will speed up to 30 times normal. The four-digit tape counter and its reset button, the counter memory switch and the "auto-find" switch (for fast location of the start of programs) are all located on the top of the recorder. The

controls for presetting TV channels and for setting the timer are set inside the recorder beneath hinged doors. On, off and timer switches, the clock display, a TV/VCR switch, a dew indicator and channel selectors and indicators are located on the front surface. The lower, slightly recessed edge of the front of the recorder contains a tape speed (Beta II/Beta III) selector, a videocamera remote jack, microphone, video and audio input terminals, a remote control jack and a "tracking" control knob.

Two innovative features are a built-in dew or moisture eliminating heater, which remains powered even when it's switched off and the design of the cassette compart-

ment, which rises automatically when the "on" power switch is activated, as long as there is no cassette already in the compartment.

The rear panel of this VCR is equipped with the usual antenna input and output coaxial connectors, audio- and video-output terminals and a channel 3/4 selector for the built-in RF modulator which enables the user to view VCR pictures via a locally unused TV channel.

Before delving into the measured and observed performance of this Sears VCR, we must comment favorably on the layout and text of the owner's manual. It's clearly written and liberally sprinkled with easy-to-understand diagrams which aid in both the installation and operation phases of ownership. An extra bonus is a handy table which relates four-digit tape counter readings, with actual recording times for all lengths of tape available in Beta-format cassettes.

Frequency Response

We used a special multiburst test signal to evaluate the frequency response of this VCR. Results were poorer than we have come to expect from Beta-format VCRs (Figs. 2a, b). Somewhat surprisingly, too, results were just as poor whether the machine was operated at the faster (three-hour) Beta II speed or the five-hour Beta III speed. Measured directly from the video-output jack, the 2 MHz signal was attenuated by 10.5 dB, while measured via the TV (demodulated) output, the way most viewers would normally use the VCR, attenuation was even greater, measuring -12 dB at 2 MHz for both operating speeds.

The stairstep signal we use to determine

SPECIFICATION CHART

Manufacturer: **SEARS** Product: **VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER**
Model No.: **562.53220150** Serial No.: **41012813**

SPECIFICATION	MFR'S LISTING	VR MEASURED OR COMMENTS
VIDEO SECTION		
Video Output		1 Volt
Maximum Record/Play Time		5 Hours
Frequency Response (TV Output)		
Playback, Beta II		-12 dB @ 2 MHz
Playback, Beta III		-12 dB @ 2 MHz
Frequency Response (Video Output)		
Playback, Beta II		-10.5 dB @ 2 MHz
Playback, Beta III		-10.5 dB @ 2 MHz
Signal-to-Noise Ratios		
Red-Field Chroma, Beta II		
TV Output, AM/PM		38/37 dB
Video Output, AM/PM		39/37.5 dB
Red-Field Chroma, Beta III		
TV Output, AM/PM		37/36.5 dB
Video Output, AM/PM		37.5/37 dB
Luminance, Beta II		
TV Output (100/50/10 IRE)		40/40/40 dB
Video Output (100/50/10 IRE)		40/40.5/40 dB
Luminance, Beta III		
TV Output (100/50/10 IRE)		39.5/39.5/39 dB
Video Output (100/50/10 IRE)		39.5/39.5/39 dB

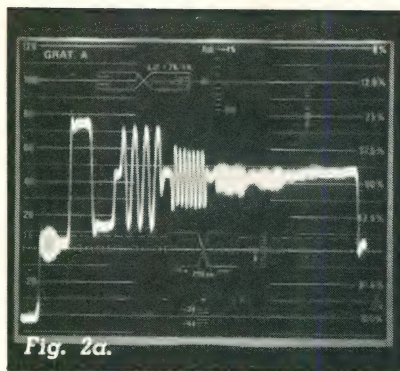


Fig. 2a. Multiburst test, TV output at Beta II: poor frequency response.

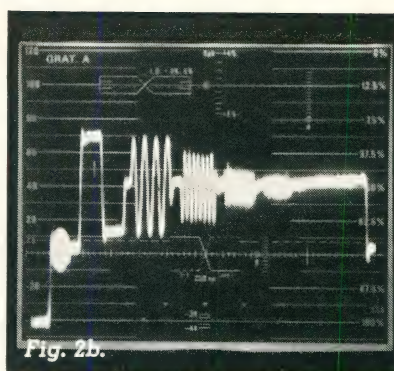


Fig. 2b. Multiburst test, video output at Beta II: very poor response.

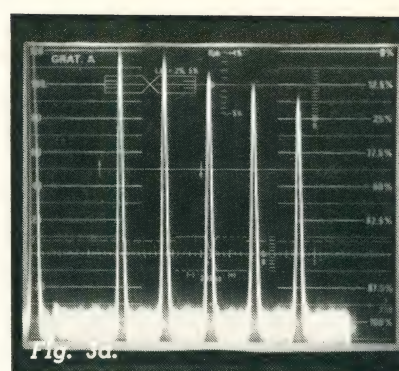


Fig. 3a. Stairstep linearity test, TV output at Beta II: quite poor.

a VCR's linearity in reproducing varying shades of gray was applied to the Sears model. Results were much poorer than we have come to expect from this test (figs. 3a, b), with worst-case linearity deviation as high as 18%. Furthermore, results were the same whether measured from the video-out jack or via the TV signal path, and there was virtually no difference in results when tape speed was switched from Beta II to Beta III.

Sin² Pulse and Bar

These tests are designed to show relative chrominance (color signal) to luminance (brightness signal) delay and gain. Results for this Sears VCR were excellent when measured at Beta II and Beta III speeds, as well as when measured via the video-output jack directly, and through the TV output (figs. 6a, b). Good results for this test mean that reproduced video pictures will not be troubled with overly bright borders and edges which are sometimes mistaken for TV "ghosts."

Color accuracy was good to very good

at the Beta II speed, whether measured directly from the video-output jack (figs. 4c, d) or via the TV output (figs. 4a, b). At the slower Beta III speed, however, we did note some significant color shifting, particularly in the red, yellow, green and cyan regions. Blue and magenta regions in the vectorscope measurements remained pretty much "on target" even at the slower tape speed. These slight color shifts remained about the same regardless of whether the results were measured from the video or the TV output.

Measurements relating to signal-to-noise ratios with respect to red chroma (color) and with respect to luminance (brightness) were somewhat poorer at both operating speeds than those we have come to expect from Beta-format VCRs. As might be expected, results were poorer at the slower Beta III speed than at Beta II, and were further degraded (though not by a substantial amount) when measured from the TV output, as compared with video output.

We were disappointed with the audio frequency response for this VCR at both

its operating speeds. At the Beta II speed, response (for a -3 dB roll-off end point) extended only from 150 Hz to 9.5 kHz (fig. 5). While the treble end of this usable response is not bad, we wonder why the VCR attenuates low frequencies as severely as it does. To be sure, most speakers found in portable TV sets can't reproduce frequencies much below 150 Hz, but these days more people connect a VCR's audio-output jacks to high-fidelity audio

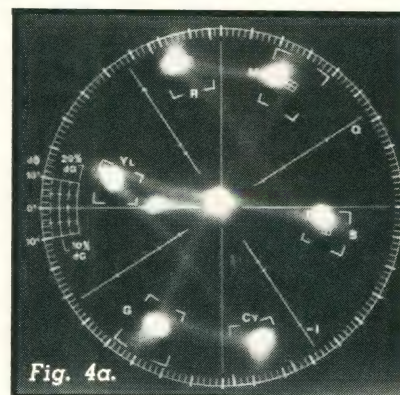


Fig. 4a. Color purity test, TV output at Beta II: high accuracy.

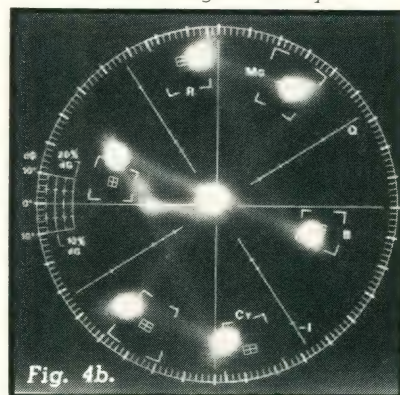


Fig. 4b. Color purity test, TV output at Beta III: some color shifting.

SPECIFICATION CHART

Manufacturer: **SEARS** Product: **VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER**
Model No.: **562.53220150** Serial No.: **41012813**

SPECIFICATION MFR'S LISTING VR MEASURED OR COMMENTS

AUDIO SECTION

0 dB Reference Level at 400 Hz (Output)	
Beta II	.58 Volts
Beta III	.58 Volts
THD at Referenced Output	
Beta II	2.5%
Beta III	2.5%
Weighted Peak Flutter	
Beta II (Avg/Peak)	.28/.34%
Beta III (Avg/Peak)	.40/.50%
Frequency Response for -3 dB	
Beta II	150 Hz to 9.5 kHz
Beta III	150 Hz to 7 kHz
Signal-to-Noise, Record/Play	
Beta II	41.5 dB
Beta III	40 dB
Harmonic Distortion @ -10 dB (Beta II/Beta III)	
100 Hz	1.1/1.1%
1 kHz	Less than .2/.2%
5 kHz	Less than .3/ Less than .3%

systems, or to projection TV sets which do incorporate somewhat better sound systems and larger loudspeakers. Under such circumstances, the bass roll-off (which was also present at the slower speed, along with treble roll-off at 7 kHz) would be quite noticeable.

Playback-only signal-to-noise for the

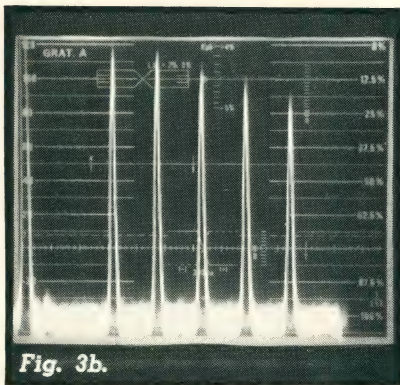


Fig. 3b.

Stairstep linearity test, TV output at Beta III: also poor.

audio section measured an acceptable 44 dB, while signal-to-noise for the complete record/play cycle measured a somewhat poorer-than-average 41.5 dB at the Beta II operating speed and 40 dB at the Beta III speed.

Audio Measurements

Harmonic distortion was fairly high at both operating speeds, when referenced

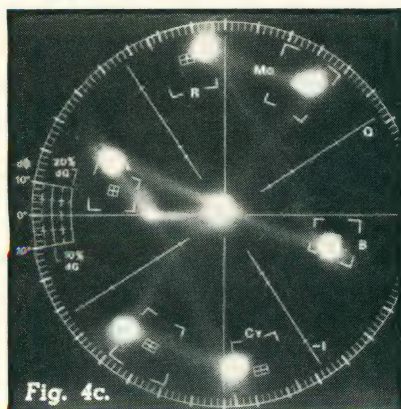


Fig. 4c.

Color purity test, video output at Beta II: very high accuracy.

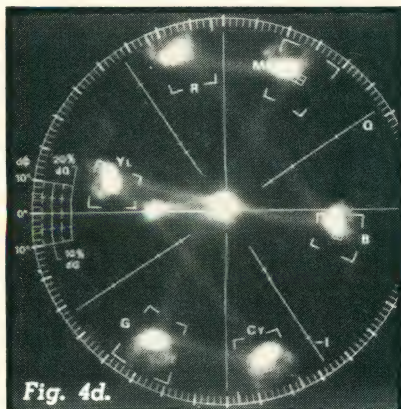


Fig. 4d.

Color purity test, video output at Beta III: slight color shifting.

to maximum audio output level, measuring 2.5% at both speeds. This distortion did decrease to quite acceptable levels, however, when we reduced the audio levels from the reference level by 10 dB. Average and peak flutter measured a barely acceptable .28% and .34%

SPECIFICATION CHART

Manufacturer: **SEARS** Product: **VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDER**
Model No.: **562.53220150** Serial No.: **41012813**

SPECIFICATION

MFR'S LISTING

VR MEASURED
OR COMMENTS

ADDITIONAL DATA

Power Requirements	50 Watts
Fast-Forward Time (L-250 cassette)	1 Minute 17 Seconds
Fast-Rewind Time (L-250 cassette)	1 Minute 17 Seconds
Dimensions (HxWxD, in inches)	6¼x18¾x15¼
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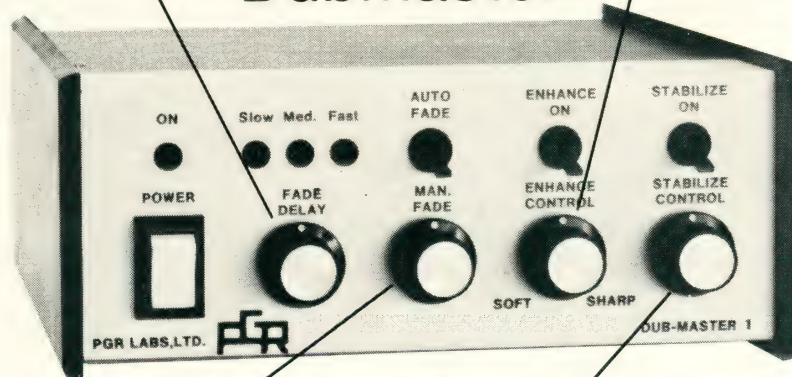
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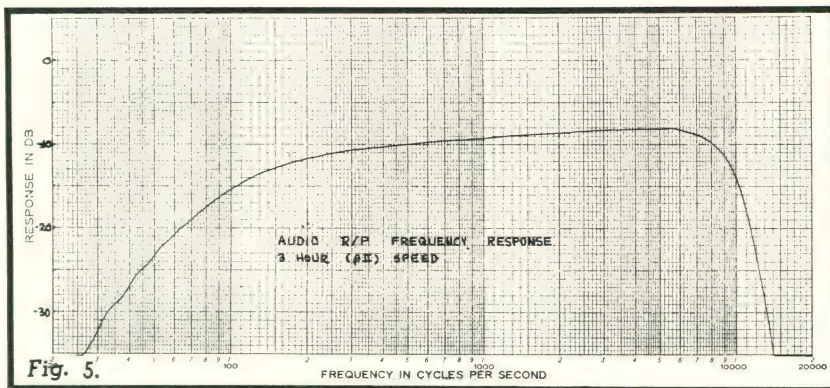
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Audio frequency response at Beta II: disappointing results indicate noticeable distortion when used with good speakers.

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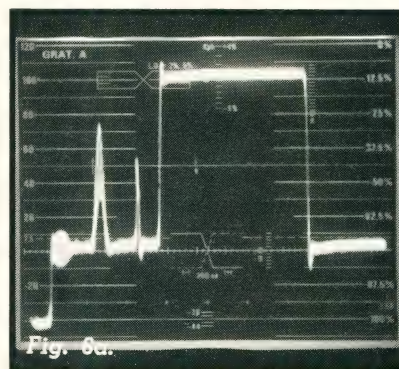
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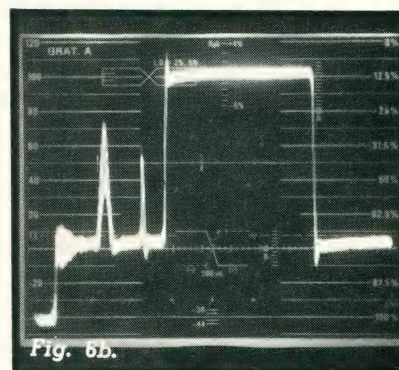
respectively at Beta II, increasing to .4% and .5% at the slower Beta III tape speed.

Summary

One limitation of this VCR is that freeze-frame doesn't work when the recorder is in the Beta II mode, but worked quite well in Beta III. In fact, all of the microprocessor-controlled functions worked flawlessly and reliably, time after time. One serious problem we found, though, is that on playback the color signal level was attenuated rather severely. While some TV receivers have automatic gain control circuitry to compensate for low levels, others don't, and you would have to adjust the color yourself for these. Color (chroma) "noise" is amplified as well, and this was obvious in our actual use tests, though our



Sin² pulse and bar test, TV output at Beta II: excellent results.



Sin² pulse and bar test, TV output at Beta III: also excellent results.

monitor didn't require adjustment.

We only wish the basic performance of this VCR were as good as the special effects features about which Sears folks seem so proud. (L.F.)□

Coming Up

The Sony Profeel will be featured in next month's Test Reports, with a four-part report covering each of its components. In addition, there will be two standard test reports on new video equipment. Future Test Reports will include an exclusive test on Hitachi's new MOS tubeless videocamera and on the NEC monitor.



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CHAMPIONS' SECRETS FOR BEATING THE BEST VIDEO GAMES

By Phil Wiswell

The key to understanding video games lies in the Filipino monkey trap. A hollowed-out coconut is filled with rice and chained to the ground. When a monkey reaches in and grabs a handful of rice, its fist becomes too large to pull back out of the coconut. Panicked, the monkey will not release the rice from its hand, although that simple gesture would save its life.

Anyone who has ever wrapped a hand around the joystick of a game such as "Space Invaders," "Asteroids" or "Pac-Man" knows what that poor, trapped monkey feels like. There you are, doing just fine, when suddenly things on the screen get fast and furious. You panic. Game over.

Since all three games' point scores are unlimited, no one



can beat "Space Invaders," "Asteroids" or "Pac-Man"—the most popular and addictive of all video games. Yet there are inside tricks and strategic subtleties which we've gathered exclusively from national video-game champions, critics and the original designers of each game cartridge that can help you master the games.

'SPACE INVADERS'

Of the video games that are hardest to master, "Space Invaders" is the easiest, because the program is very predictable. That's why Bill Heineman, a 17-year-old from California, was able to rack up 165,200 points in two hours of competition to win the first National Space In-





vaders Championship in November, 1980. When the games were turned off, Bill and four other finalists had not lost a single laser cannon. I spoke with them after the match to uncover their secrets and strategies which, correctly employed, could hypothetically keep a game of "Space Invaders" going forever. So far, scores of 500,000 to 700,000 have been common using these techniques.

There are two main rules to playing great "Space Invaders." First, keep moving unless you have reason to wait behind a barrier. Once you fire a shot, move immediately. Moving the laser cannon will not affect the upward direction of a fired missile, and it will avoid drawing unnecessary fire from aliens sensing your presence.

The second rule is to keep cool under pressure.

Let go of the coconut. All the strategy I can give you will probably only relieve a portion of the pressure you'll feel while playing a game. You still have to overcome the rest by not going into a panic.

Now for the strategy. There are four "fields" in "Space Invaders." Once a field is destroyed, a new one replaces it a row closer to your laser cannon. (Remember: If a single

alien makes it to earth, the game ends.) So how do you take care of the first field?

Figure 1 (next page) answers that question by numbering the aliens in the order you should zap them, leaving eight on the screen. When the game begins, your laser cannon will be slightly to the right of the column on the far left, which you want to destroy first. Wait exactly seven heartbeats, then let go with rapid fire, moving right just a bit with every two shots to keep up with the moving column. Then, following the numbers in Figure 1, move to the column on the extreme right (blasting the two bottom aliens in each column along the way), and destroy it.

If you have to blast your way through your own protective barriers or come back for one or two aliens which were hidden as you went by, that's okay. Just don't get too far out of step. Count the aliens as you kill them, because after your twelfth hit, the Mother Ship will appear at the top of the screen on the right side. Go for it if you can.

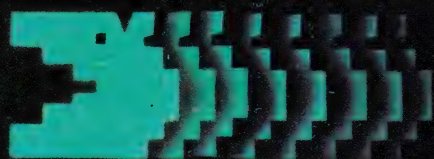
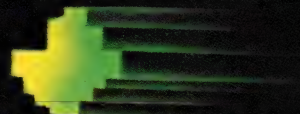
If you manage to finish up with the numbers in Figure 1 quickly, it will take the remaining eight aliens some time to make their way to the bottom of the screen, and you will have a chance at as many as four more Mother Ships (which alternate entering from right and left). A key point: *A Mother Ship will not appear on the screen—once there are fewer than eight aliens left.* That's why you want to get the grouping of eight in Figure 1. Once you have shot a few Mother Ships, destroy the remaining eight aliens by staying in the middle of the screen behind what's left of your middle barrier. Slip out to take potshots at them one at a time. With only three, two or one left, they will be moving fast. But never attempt to keep up with them.

When you have eliminated the first field, the second will set up a row closer to you and begin marching. Again, wait seven heartbeats and fire using Figure 1 as a guide.

The third field begins another row so close to you that it doesn't leave you enough time to use the strategy outlined

for the first and second fields. The general idea, however, is the same: You want to chop the phalanx down to eight aliens—two rows of four—and wait for the Mother Ship. See Figure 2 for the order in which to destroy this field.

Rather than waste any time, you should zip to the right side of the screen and destroy that column first. Then come back across to the left, eliminating two aliens from each column. Again, if you have to shoot your way through the barriers to get at the aliens, that's okay. You



do not have enough time to get out of step at this point.

The fourth field appears with no barriers, so it's just aliens against a laser cannon with nowhere to hide. It calls for immediate action and rapid movement. The bottom aliens are so close now, you can be blown up before you can say "licked again." See Figure 3 for the order in which to destroy the fourth field—the most important order to learn, because you will use it on all succeeding fields.

The fifth field starts the aliens as low as they can start, so it's as tough as it gets. But if you can master Figure 3 and avoid the enemy laser fire, you'll rack up a lot of points.

Tip: Keep your finger on the fire button or keep the direction controller pointed while a new field sets up, to get the jump on them.

Four Final Hints

- A missile, once fired, must hit an alien, an alien missile or a Mother Ship—or pass out of the top of the screen—before another missile can be fired. Therefore, don't waste your time flicking the fire button wildly; it will eat up too much time.
- With a full field of aliens, your heart will beat 27 times before they drop down a row.
- Maintain more columns than rows; it gives you more targets.
- The Mother Ship will pass overhead after 12 aliens have been destroyed. Watch for it.

'ASTEROIDS'

"Asteroids" is much more difficult to master than "Space Invaders" because its format is more abstract. However, as with all video games, there is a strict format to "Asteroids," no matter how complex. Once you understand it, your scores will improve dramatically. This is a discussion of Atari's "Asteroids Game #2" played at B difficulty, although the general strategy will be of help in playing any of the other 65 variations.

Wiswell's Four Rules of 'Asteroids'

1. Stay in the center of the screen.
2. Avoid going into hyperspace.
3. Avoid using forward thrust.
4. Break rules 2 and 3 only when rule 1 cannot be followed without losing a ship.

Like most of the outer-space video games, "Asteroids" is played with increasingly fast fields. On the first field, the asteroids will be traveling basically north or south on the edges of the screen. The game never starts with one right under or over your ship. Turn your ship due west or east, depending on the closest asteroid. You want to blow up the closer ones first, since all asteroids gravitate towards the center of the screen sooner or later, and the closer ones will get there that much faster.

When you hit a large asteroid, it breaks into two medium ones. When you hit a medium asteroid, it breaks into two small ones. The explosion also alters their course, sending them into the screen on more of a diagonal. Obviously, the small ones are the hardest to hit. The ideal strategy is to fire at a single large asteroid in bursts of two or three shots, hoping that one of the extra shots will hit the resulting smaller asteroids. Before blowing up another large asteroid (unless one is heading straight for you), try to blow up the medium and small asteroids you've created by hitting a large one.

Caution: Never blow up all large asteroids without having blown up at least half the medium and small ones.

When there aren't many threats left on the side where you started, change direction by 180° and commence firing with the same strategy. Now and then you may have to spin around to kill off a straggler, but it is worth not moving from the center of the screen. The small ships aren't really that hard to hit. You just have to remain calm and take them in order of their proximity.

Try to have only one small asteroid left at the end. At

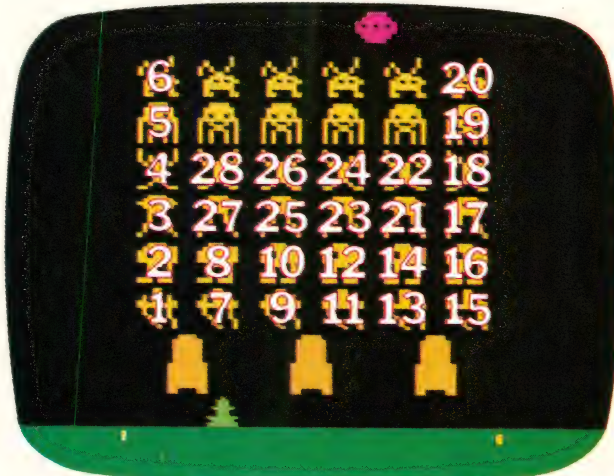


Figure 1.

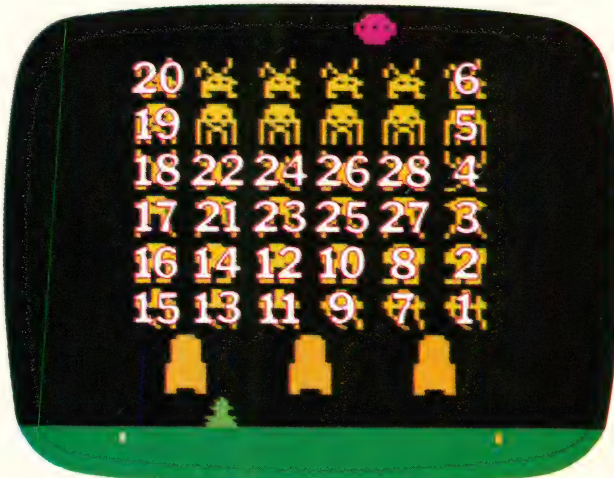


Figure 2.



Figure 3.

that point take a quick breather. Check your position. If you aren't in the center of the screen get there. You may have to maneuver around a few times, but it's worth being centered when the new field arrives. Once centered, blast off the little asteroid and get ready for a new field.

To understand how a single asteroid approaches you, let's look at a single asteroid's path around the screen. Figure 4 shows its approximate path, with numbers indicating its entry and exit points. Eventually, all paths cross the center of the screen.

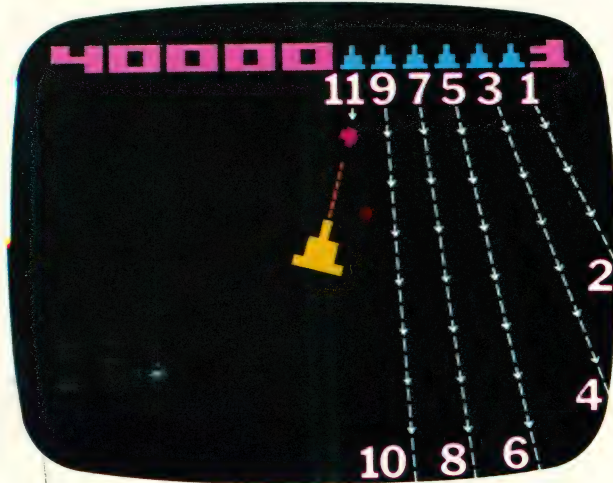


Figure 4.



Figure 5.

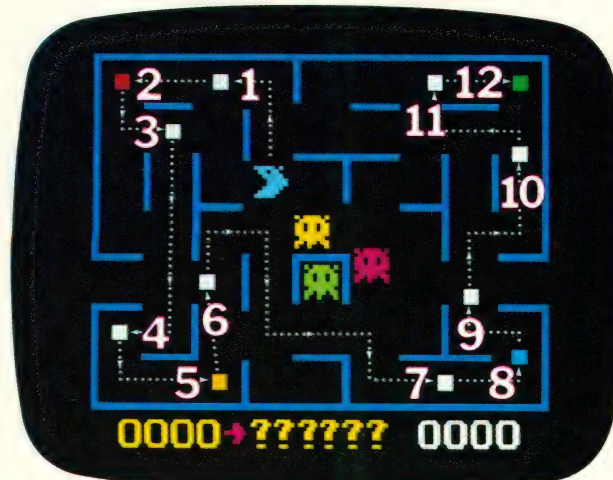


Figure 6.

If you have no way out of a collision, always choose the smallest asteroid. A collision still scores points, and in some cases, enough to earn you a new ship.

'K.C. MUNCHKIN'

In this game, released in 1981 for the Odyssey² game system, you control K.C. Munchkin, a gobbling mouth trying to eat 12 munchies while avoiding three munchers. If that sounds familiar, it's because "K.C. Munchkin" is the first home variation on the "Pac-Man" theme.

The strategy outlined here will be for Game #0, the first and hardest maze according to Garland Newport. A senior lab technician for N.A.P. Consumer Electronics, the company that makes the Odyssey² games, Newport has played "K.C. Munchkin" more than 1,000 times in his search for program bugs to be eliminated.

"What I normally do is go to the upper left-hand corner," says Newport, "eat the first white dot if it gets in the way, and then I sit next to the first blinking dot until the munchers chasing me come up there. When they get close enough to me that I think I can eat them before they change back, I grab the colored dot and chase them."

Figure 5 shows how every field begins. There are twelve dots to be eaten, with two white and one flashing dot in each corner of the maze. By eating the white dots you gain points, but nothing else. By eating a flashing dot, however, all three munchers become vulnerable to you. In other words, for a few seconds—randomly selected from one to four—you can also eat the munchers. When vulnerable, munchers turn purple and will avoid you like the plague. If they are chasing you as you eat a flashing dot, they will turn tail and run like frightened children. So trick them into following you close enough to a flashing dot.

In each new field, you should work your way around clockwise, eating the dots according to the numbers in Figure 6. Use the flashing dots as defense to repel the munchers, or use yourself as bait to attract and eat them. Sometimes you won't be able to follow the numbers in Figure 6 and will have to improvise. There's nothing you can do to prepare for this.

- One word of caution: You can let a muncher get very close to you, but always allow about a quarter-inch between you and it if you plan to turn any corners safely with a muncher on your tail.
- One bug in the program: Use only north, south, east and west directions on the controllers. If you hold the controller northwest (thinking it is north), K.C. Munchkin will go north—until he hits a wall or the top of the screen. At that point he'll turn west, and you'll have lost control of the game for a moment. Just make sure to move the controller in a perfect cross.
- One super hot tactic: There's an advantage to saving a blinking dot for last if you are either very quick or very lucky. If the last dot you eat on a field is a flashing one, the three munchers will enter from the center hole on the new field *still vulnerable to you!* That means if you can pick the side they will enter from, or if you are fast enough, you can eat all three right at the start, leaving you plenty of time to clear the maze before they regenerate.

So there it is. Now you are armed with all the information you need to improve your play on these three video games. Just remember the story about the monkey every time you hit "reset" on your console. □

By Frank Lovece

Who would even consider buying a new car if its warranty covered "everything" except the motor, the chassis and the wheels? Who would buy home insurance if it didn't protect against fire, weather or theft? Surely, no one with intelligence enough to be able to plug in a VCR. Yet every day more video fans are paying for equipment with warranties that fall short of protecting the very components most likely to break down.

Like uniformed doormen at swank hotels, most video-equipment warranties look so fancy and important that it's hard to believe they don't do anything. In all fairness, most do cover a wide range of problems under given terms. But, from VCR heads to video-camera pickup tubes, the most critical components of some pieces of equipment are often the ones left largely unprotected.

Unfortunately, no one can choose among different warranties for any one video product, since every manufacturer simply slips in a warranty along with the styrofoam in its product packaging—and that's that. If you like a certain product, you'd better like its warranty. Or, much wiser, you'd better understand the conditions and catches of warranties—before you decide to buy any video gear.

Warranties and Peace

According to a survey by the Guaranteed Tube Replacement Company, an independent company offering video service contracts, equipment repair costs are skyrocketing. The average hourly labor cost of a video technician is about \$50. The average time a malfunctioning VCR spends on the service table is about 2½ hours. Plus, the cost of video replacement parts can run to hundreds of dollars for heads and tubes, the major components likely to wear out the quickest.

Not only are repair costs mounting, but so is a related matter—equipment sophistication. "If a VCR goes on the blink," says Bill Leuders, owner of Uncle Toot's video-store chain, "most people have absolutely no idea what could be wrong after checking the plug." Even backyard mechanics and weekend tinkerers would have a tough time replacing an integrated-circuit board. So video buffs caught without good warranties or some other form of coverage may find themselves wishing they'd taken up a less expensive pursuit—like collecting Rolls Royces.

Lately, both manufacturers' warranties and service contracts have begun to offer longer and more comprehensive terms. Larry Menaugh, a former Sony and RCA executive and now a video consultant, likens the situation to one when color TV sets were new. "Manufacturers have had to get a feel for the breakdown rate. Now there's enough video gear around that manufacturers have a history to go by." After more than a decade of consumer video, the shape of warranties may be changing.

Still, there are certain similarities among most video-equipment manufacturers' warranties today. Virtually all, for example, separate parts and labor costs. The most common setup is for the manufacturer to supply free replacement parts for malfunctioning video gear



WARRA WHAT THEY WHAT THE

for a year while picking up the labor tab for 90 days. Critics of these divided plans stress that replacing a broken part isn't much remedy, since the labor cost usually makes up most of a repair bill. Manufacturers reply that if a machine is going to break down because of a built-in defect, it'll probably do so within the first 90 days. In fact, says Dean Chitwood of RCA, "Most problems will turn up in the first month or so."

This hasn't stopped some manufacturers from offering much more extensive warranties, however. Curtis



WARRANTIES COVER—AND COVER UP

Mathes provides a four-year parts-and-labor warranty on each of its video products. Hitachi, and more recently Akai, have gone to two-year warranties on parts. And five companies—Hitachi, Pioneer, Sanyo, Sears and Toshiba—have one-year labor warranties on some or all of their products. Mitsubishi's warranty on parts is one year, and on labor is six months, twice that of many other companies. Some of the newer videodisc player warranties are more extensive than those for VCRs and videocameras.

Of course, the length of a warranty is but a single factor in deciding on a brand of video gear—and one usually not given equal footing with price, image quality and features. But since it and other warranty particulars vary considerably from brand to brand, and with more and more manufacturers entering video, it's becoming increasingly wise to look over warranties carefully before making a final decision.

Other than the parts-and-labor division, the most common warranty particular is probably the exclusion of a specific part from coverage. A frequent omission is the videocamera image-pickup tube, which is almost always exempt from free manufacturer replacement after the first six months of ownership. Not every manufacturer subscribes to this rule, however. So it can be worthwhile to check—especially since the pickup tube is not only one of the most expensive components of a videocamera, but also one of the most easily damaged.

Ironically, even the Guaranteed Tube Replacement Company (named for TV-set picture tubes) refuses to offer service contracts covering videocameras, largely because the tubes are so expensive. But solid-state technology may do away with that problem eventually. Hitachi's new tubeless videocamera, the first of its kind, comes with the same one-year warranty on its image sensor as on the rest of its parts.

Fancy Phrases

Here and now, however, there are other, less obvious warranty exclusions that can be significant when you're choosing among otherwise similar products. Some manufacturers of CED-format videodisc players, for instance, exclude the stylus from the same degree of coverage as other parts—sometimes excluding it altogether. In VCRs, JVC, Kenwood and Sansui don't cover the video heads after the first 90 days. You'll also find that practically no company's warranty covers external or "cosmetic" items such as knobs and buttons. But that's actually a minor point, since you can usually replace them yourself inexpensively and more easily than going through the trouble of a service call.

Federal law states that warranties must be written in everyday language, not legalese. But even so, a plethora of legalistic catch-phrases pop up which can be almost as troublesome as warranty exclusions. Since warranties are primarily designed to cover manufacturing defects, no company—in video or any other field—is required to repair or replace a product that's been "misused" (in this context, used contrary to written instructions) or "abused" (put through treatment resulting in more than normal wear and tear). Furthermore, as conditions for coverage, some warranties prohibit such actions as leaving videocamera lens caps off when the cameras are not in use.

This is all perfectly legal, but a problem arises in deciding if a malfunction or a breakdown is a manufacturer's fault or the owner's. "Frankly, it's a judgment call," says Rachel Ward, a Washington, DC attorney specializing in consumer law. Most manufacturers claim they'll side with consumers if there's reasonable doubt. But unless you ship your gear to the factory, you'll have to pass a local service representative's evaluation first.

(Continued)

IF YOUR VIDEO IMAGE IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE,

your videotape isn't getting along with your videodeck. Don't be too quick to blame your deck, either. The picture you get depends on how smoothly and evenly your tape passes over the video heads.

After several plays, some videotape surfaces can lose their smoothness. Or the videocassette mechanisms might falter. Both situations lead to bad tape-to-head contact. Your picture quivers and quakes, or bends at the top. Even worse, improper tape tension can mean a cassette's untimely end. A misaligned cassette mechanism can jam itself out of existence. Hardly the steady performance you paid for.

THE SOLUTION IS SUPER AVILYN.

With TDK Super Avilyn, tape and heads remain on the best of terms. TDK's super precision mechanism and cassette shell are meticulously engineered to the last detail. So tape meets heads at exactly the right angle and tension. Skew stays out of the picture. And jamming no longer threatens cassette life.

Inside that shell is TDK's outstanding Super Avilyn videotape. Tape particles are densely packed on the surface. They're perfectly aligned for a high signal-to-noise ratio. Colors stay rich and natural. The tape surface is polished mirror-smooth. Oxide particles don't shed. The picture

stays steadfastly true to the original. Without jitters, or other video headaches.

Our place in video covers more than just tape. We were involved in the earliest stages of home



video, and have been there throughout its development. Today TDK supplies video heads and other component parts to major videodeck makers. So it's no surprise that Super Avilyn is very compatible with most decks.

It's a solid fact. You've invested too much in video to settle for a picture that doesn't know its place. TDK Super Avilyn will keep your video image exactly where you want it to be.

 **TDK**
THE VISION OF THE FUTURE



SUPER AVILYN

Life is no easier for video fans caught in the web of the phrase, "not responsible for incidental or consequential damages." If it were a refrigerator under discussion, that would mean the manufacturer wouldn't be liable for spoiled food if the fridge broke down because of a defect during the warranty period. In video, however, it means you have virtually no recourse if a brand new VCR mangles a prize tape or breaks down the same day as that once-in-a-lifetime telecast. Six states—Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia—do prohibit this "incidental or consequential damage" disclaimer, so a determined video buff may have a fighting chance in these states.

Most of the other warranty conditions (such as specifying that owners take the video equipment to factory-authorized service centers and present proof of purchase) and warranty exemptions (such as those for equipment purchased outside the United States or equipment with defaced or removed serial numbers) are also legal. You can even be required to send in a warranty registration card as a condition of coverage.

Law-Di-Da

Federal and state warranty laws spell out fairly clearly what a video buyer is entitled to under warranty. In fact, the federal statute at the heart of current warranty laws—the Magnuson-Moss Act of 1975—came about

WARRANTY WORDING

ABUSE Treatment resulting in more than normal wear and tear. For example, if you take your portable VCR and videocamera to the beach, but don't take precautions to keep potentially harmful salt air out of the equipment, that might constitute abuse and void a warranty.

ACTS OF GOD Occurrences which are the result of natural causes without human intervention, and that couldn't have been prevented by foresight or care. Damage by floods, earthquakes and storms can fall into this category, also referred to as "natural disasters."

CARRY-IN SERVICE Repair or maintenance contingent on an owner taking a product ("carrying" it in) to a service facility.

CONSEQUENTIAL/INCIDENTAL DAMAGES Damage to people or things, caused by the malfunction or breakdown of a product. For example, a malfunctioning VCR may cause electric shock or may mangle videotape.

EXPRESS WARRANTY Specific product claims, whether oral or written. If a salesperson claims a videodisc player is stereo-capable, for example, it has to be able to play stereo videodiscs—in stereo.

FULL WARRANTY One which does not disclaim or limit "implied warranties" (see below), and which sets manufacturer requirements of remedy within a reasonable period of time. "Full" does *not* mean that the entire product is covered by the warranty, that the warranty has to last for any specific length of time nor that the manufacturer must pay for consequential/incidental damages.

IMPLIED WARRANTY Basic protection under state laws. A product (except those sold "as is" in most states) must at least function as it's designed to (every VCR, for example, must play back and record tapes) and perform whatever particular functions it's supposed to (a Beta-format VCR must work with Beta-format cassettes).

LIMITED WARRANTY One which does not disclaim implied warranties but can limit them. Ex-

amples of limited warranties include those which cover only parts, not labor; specify pro-rated refunds or credit; require a purchaser to return the warranty registration card to be covered; do not allow warranty coverage to be transferred to a new owner during the warranty period.

MANUFACTURING DEFECT An imperfection in either "materials" (the physical parts themselves) or "workmanship" (the way the parts are put together). A manufacturing defect that becomes evident during the warranty period is covered.

MISUSE Usually, but not necessarily, use contrary to the written instructions.

REASONABLE AND NECESSARY MAINTENANCE Operations which a consumer can be reasonably expected to execute and which are necessary to keep a product performing properly. These could include, for example, keeping a lens cap on a videocamera when the camera's not in use, or cleaning the heads of a videocassette recorder periodically.

REMEDY A refund for, or repair or replacement of, a product under warranty.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEE A type of warranty. It's a written assurance of compensation if a product isn't to your liking. If a guarantee of satisfaction applies to a whole store or line of products and has no limitations, then these companies don't have to make written warranties on each item. If it has a limitation (say, a product must be returned within 10 days of sale), then specific warranty disclosure is required.

SERVICE CONTRACT A written contract for performance of repair and/or maintenance for a specified duration. This isn't a warranty but a written agreement.

UNAUTHORIZED REPAIR Service by someone not authorized by the manufacturer can void a warranty. Even removing any of the panels from a product to reveal the electronics might be considered unauthorized repair. (F.L.)

just before the first consumer video gear in today's formats hit the stores.

Before that statute was passed, recalls former Senator Frank E. "Ted" Moss (D-Utah) who co-sponsored the bill, "Courts were bound by warranty limitations the layman was not trained to see." The situation reached a point at which manufacturers could require a customer to ship—prepaid—heavy air-conditioners before even getting a decision on whether or not a breakdown was covered. Some warranties, says Moss, "looked like shares of stock, they were so gussied up." But the timely passage of the Magnuson-Moss Act ensured that all current-format video gear would fall under its consumer-oriented provisions.

'Full' or 'Limited'?

One of the statute's laws mandates that manufacturers clearly define whether warranties are "full" or the more common "limited" variety. In each case, manufacturers must state precisely what is covered and for how long, what remedy they will provide, what they *won't* provide, what limitations or conditions exist and the statement, "This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state."

A warranty can't contain fine print, it has to be written in layman's language and it legally binds the equipment manufacturer (not the retailer, *unless* a manufacturer says so in the warranty). A warranty is limited if, among other things, it includes a duration of coverage or a handling charge, if it requires you to send in a warranty card or if it excludes labor costs.

Even before the Magnuson-Moss Act, some state laws provided that, unless you're told up front that a product has no warranty ("as is" products, for example), you have, at the very least, two types of "implied warranties." For example, a videocassette recorder must be able to record and play back tapes (implied warranty of "merchantability"). And, for instance, a Beta-format VCR must work with Beta videocassettes (implied warranty of "fitness for a particular purpose"). Unless a written one supersedes it, an implied warranty lasts for four years from date of purchase. In seven states—Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Vermont and West Virginia—"as is" exclusions are illegal.

All these protective points still don't blot out a single fact: The warranty you see is the warranty you get. You can't amend or change it. You can bargain with the retailer for a better deal, but that's only between you and a particular video store. And unless you get such an agreement in writing, it's extremely difficult to prove later on.

Service Contracts

What more and more video buyers are turning to, however, are service contracts. Sometimes (and mistakenly) called an "extended warranty," a service contract is a formal repair/maintenance agreement you can buy from a video service center—usually, the retailer from whom you bought your equipment. At a set price and for a set period of time, the service center takes care of equipment breakdowns or malfunctions without charging you additionally. It's similar to a warranty. But unlike one, it isn't subject to the Magnuson-

HOW WARRANT

MANUFACTURER	PRODUCT
AKAI	VCRs videocameras
CURTIS MATHES	VCRs videocameras
FISHER	VCRs
GENERAL ELECTRIC	VCRs videocameras
HITACHI	VCRs videocameras videodisc players
JC PENNEY	VCRs* videocameras*
JVC	VCRs videocameras
KENWOOD	VCRs
MAGNAVOX	VCRs videocameras videodisc players
MITSUBISHI	VCRs
MONTGOMERY WARD	VCRs* videocameras* videodisc players*
NEC	VCRs videocameras
PANASONIC	VCRs videocameras
PHILCO	VCRs videocameras
PIONEER	videodisc players
QUASAR	VCRs videocameras
RADIO SHACK	videodisc players
RCA	VCRs videocameras videodisc players
SANSUI	VCRs
SANYO	VCRs videocameras videodisc players
SEARS	VCRs** videocameras** videodisc players**
SHARP	VCRs videocameras
SONY	VCRs videocameras
SYLVANIA	VCRs videocameras
TECHNICOLOR	VCRs TV/VCR combo videocameras
TOSHIBA	VCRs videocameras videodisc players
ZENITH	VCRs videocameras videodisc players

* First 90 days, full warranty

** Full warranty

WARRANTIES COMPARE

PARTS	LABOR
1 year (Model VS-1, 2 years)	90 days
1 year (tube, 90 days)	90 days
4 years	4 years
4 years	4 years
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
2 years	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months; MOS image sensor, 1 year)	90 days
1 year	1 year
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
1 year (video heads, 90 days)	90 days
1 year (tube, 90 days)	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	3 months
1 year (tube, 6 months)	3 months
1 year	3 months
1 year	6 months
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
1 year	1 year
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
90 days	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
90 days	90 days
1 year (video heads, 90 days)	90 days
1 year	1 year
1 year	1 year
1 year (stylus, no warranty)	1 year
1 year	1 year
1 year	1 year
1 year	1 year
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 90 days)	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 6 months)	90 days
1 year (video heads, 90 days)	90 days
1 year (video heads, 90 days)	90 days
1 year (tube, 90 days)	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year (tube, 90 days)	1 year
1 year (stylus, 90 days)	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days
1 year	90 days

Compiled by Frank Lovece

Moss Act or other related laws. It's a contract, plain and simple.

By most estimates, about 30% of the people buying video gear take out service contracts at the same time as their purchases. Larry Sullivan, franchise manager of the Tronics 2000 video service-center chain, finds that the average person will buy one because "it's a fixed expense. You know from the start what a piece of video equipment will cost to maintain over a given period of time. It's like psychological insurance—it takes the apprehension out of owning complex electronic equipment."

The Cons of Contracts

Even so, cautions Bill Leuders, service contracts aren't for all VCR owners—especially light users of video gear. "If a set of video heads lasts for four years, and you're paying \$80 a year for a contract, you're better off without the extended warranty." He recommends putting \$100 annually into a bank account, letting it collect interest and considering *that* your equipment insurance.

Conventional insurance, incidentally, will cover only theft, loss or damage and not breakdowns or malfunctions, according to an insurance-industry spokesperson.

If you opt for a service contract, you can choose from three basic kinds: (1) a manufacturer's program, (2) an independent, franchise program or (3) an individual program at a particular store.

The first two are similar, except that a manufacturer's service contract covers only one brand. GE, RCA and Sears have three of the most extensive of such programs, with their contracts honored at all factory-authorized dealers nationwide. Independent programs may offer the similar benefit of service at any franchise, especially those adopted by video-store chains—but not always. If you take out a contract with a local store that's not factory authorized, and the store works on your equipment, your warranty may become void. So, it's a good idea to consider whether or not you might move away during the one-, two-, or three-year duration of most service contracts. Naturally, you'd have the same problem if a non-authorized store were to work on your equipment and then go out of business. You'd find yourself with a void warranty and a useless service contract.

Final Precautions

There are other precautions to take, of course. Watch out for offers of lifetime guarantees, for one thing. There are no such things. Even if you get one in writing, there's no guarantee (nor warranty) that the video store that promised it will stay in business forever. Furthermore, if you should find yourself returning a piece of video equipment back to the same service center repeatedly, you may be the victim of an all-too-common scam worked on the manufacturer that goes this way: The service center takes in your machine, does little or nothing, gives you a receipt and bills the manufacturer for work never performed—but for which a factory-authorized service center will be reimbursed.

As a rule, the best protection is to not just read in-between the lines, but also read—and carefully weigh—the lines themselves. □

VIDEO EQUIPMENT JOINS THE RENTAL REVOLUTION

By Deirdre Condon and Ed Levine

Tuxedos and chainsaws used to be the only types of things most Americans considered renting instead of buying. Recently, though, video fans seem to have begun a new kind of rental revolution—and they're renting more than tapes of *Dressed to Kill*.

The number of video viewers renting equipment is beginning to zoom, largely owing to two main factors: myths and money. Yet critics of equipment rental say the question still remains: Is renting always the best solution, or can it, in some cases, be the worst way to go?

While more and more people are finding themselves intrigued by video, some remain hesitant about purchasing equipment they consider expensive. For one thing, they're unsure about just how much they'll use it. But a more widespread though actually less well-grounded myth is that most video equipment will, in a year or less, be as obsolete as an Edsel. Finally, fears about the complicated and costly repairs such high-tech items might require send some people straight to the rental counters.

Where to Begin

The number of those rental counters is growing almost daily. Today, there are six major rental companies with multiple franchises, and others are in the works. Some local video retail stores also offer rental. But no matter where you look, you won't find two deals that are alike. The best way to go about renting is to understand the kind of rental plans you're likely to encounter, then prepare well in advance.

Some rental outlets are more specialized than others. Some, for instance, rent hi-fi gear and other types of electronic equipment along with video products. Others are planning to open up the scope of video rental by adding home computers, teletext machines and video game consoles along with the usual TV sets, VCRs, videodisc players and videocameras. None of the major companies offers either quarter-inch format video equipment or laser-optical disc players at this time.

On the other end of the spectrum is a unique program called RentaBeta. In about 500 supermarkets, drug stores, shopping centers and video stores on the West Coast, you can now rent a non-recording video player that comes in a sealed plastic case with the cassette already in place. The cost is \$9.95 a day Monday through Thursday, and \$14.95 a day Friday through Sunday.

The number and locations of general video-equipment rental franchises vary widely. One Dallas-based company, Colortyme, has 267 outlets, while California's VisionHire has only two right now. While Remco's 50 stores are located mainly in the Sun Belt, Rentacolor's 45 stores operate mostly in the eastern part of the US, where you'll also find Rent-A-Center's 58 stores and Granada's 14.

This expansion of video outlets means more kinds of plans for potential renters to choose from, and this is where careful planning comes in. If you're contemplating equipment rental, each decision you make along the way could save you money—or could end up costing you more, because there are some hidden costs in rental.

Your first step in going about sizing up a rental deal is to determine exactly what equipment you want, and what you want it for. If, for example, you simply want to watch a first-run movie at home, you won't need an extravagant VCR. In fact, you could save money by renting a videodisc player. Not only are they less expensive generally, they are a real bargain at some outlets that offer them for only \$10 a day just to introduce people to them.

If you're renting a VCR or disc player to see if you're interested in owning one, you should probably go for a top model so you can try unattended taping and all the playback features. That way, you can decide which you really want to have. And if you're renting a second VCR to do some tape dubbing, look for a model that has special effects your own model doesn't have. If yours has everything, stick with a simple one.

New or Used?

Another point to keep in mind is the difference in price between new and used models. The following comparative chart (see page 52) lists the rental fees for brand-new, fresh-out-of-the-factory-carton video gear. However, every company included in the chart gives some sort of price cut for used equipment, usually about 10%.

As important as what you want is how long you want it. Fees often depend on the length of the rental period. Depending on a store's policy, you can rent anywhere from a day to three months to forever. Remco lets you rent for as long—or as short—a period of time as you want. Granada, on the other hand, has a minimum renting period of three months, but if you rent for less than six months you lose half your deposit. Further-

more, you have to give Granada 30 days notice. If you wait till the end of three months to give notice, you have to pay the fourth month's rent.

If you're thinking of long-term rental, find out whether the company in your area has a "lease-purchase" plan. Though Colortyme and VisionHire don't engage in this, the other companies do, each with different terms. After 18 or 24 months of renting from Remco, for example, the equipment is yours. But, you'll have paid substantially more than if you simply bought it. For a GE 19-inch TV set with remote control, for instance, you'd spend about \$900—or just about twice that model's \$454.95 suggested retail price. With Granada, you can apply 50% of the rental fee for up to 70% of the purchase price. In other words, if you rent a Magnavox 19-inch portable TV set at their monthly rate of \$15.95, in 34 months you'll have paid about \$540. Half of that, or \$270, makes up 70% of the retail price, so by throwing in another \$175 you own the TV set. But the total price you've paid is about

60% higher than the same set's suggested retail price of \$449.95.

Basically, these companies are acting as finance companies, letting you pay in monthly installments. The terms might be better than you could get from a loan-shark, but you could still be buying for much less. Remember, though, that lower prices for used equipment apply, so if used equipment works to your satisfaction, you could have a decent deal, considering the service guarantees you also get.

How About Service?

It's these service guarantees that most renters find attractive. After all, if something does go wrong, it's the rental company's problem. So the exact service agreements are the third things to check before renting. Companies will usually replace a defective model free of charge, or will make minor repairs in your home. But be sure to find out exactly what your liability is.

Continued on page 56, following chart



ROUNDUP OF 1

COMPANY	EQUIPMENT	BRAND	MODEL #	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	DESCRIPTION	DEPOSIT
GRANADA	TV	Magnavox	BB4038	\$349.95	13" portable	\$35
			BA4172	\$449.95	19" portable	\$35
			RB4243	\$599.95	19" w/ remote	\$35
			RB4930	\$929.95	25" console	\$35
		RCA	EFR338R	\$469.95	13" portable	\$35
			FFR443R	\$ open	19" portable	\$35
			FFR468R	\$ open	19" w/ remote	\$35
			GFR650	\$ open	25" console w/ remote	\$35
	VCR	Magnavox	VR8315	\$ open	tabletop	\$50
			VR8335	\$1,325	tabletop	\$50
			VR8377	\$1,425	tabletop	\$50
		RCA	VCR250	\$1,075	tabletop	\$50
			VCR650	\$1,500	tabletop	\$50
	Videocamera	RCA	CC009	\$ open	color	\$550
REMCO	TV	RCA	FER450	\$ open	19" portable	one month's rent
			FFR468	\$ open	19" w/ remote	one month's rent
			GFR650	\$ open	25" console	one month's rent
			GFR691	\$869.95	25" console w/ remote	one month's rent
		General Electric	19EC1704	\$454.95	19" portable	one month's rent
			19EC2742	\$614.95	19" w/ remote	one month's rent
			25EM2822	\$719.95	25" portable	one month's rent
			VIR2849	\$959.95	25" w/ remote	one month's rent
	VCR	RCA	190VCR	\$ open	tabletop	one month's rent
RENT-A-CENTER	TV	General Electric	13AC1504	\$359	13" portable	none
			17AC2602	\$409.95	17" portable	none
			17AC2642	\$519.95	17" portable w/ remote	none
			19EC1704	\$454.95	19" portable	none
			19EC2742	\$614.95	19" portable w/ remote	none
			EM2850	\$1,019.95	25" console w/ remote	none
	VCR	RCA	VFT250	\$1,075	tabletop	none
RENTACOLOR	TV	Magnavox	4038	\$349.95	13" portable	none
			4172	\$449.95	19" portable	none
			4716	discontinued	25" console	none
		Panasonic	3031	\$500	13" w/ remote	none
			9011	\$450	19" portable	none
			9071	\$670	19" w/ remote	none
			5142	\$760	25" console	none
			5137	\$920	25" w/ remote	none

IMPORTANT NOTE: This chart is for comparison only. It does not represent all rental comp

**Prices are for camera only. Camera and por

RENTAL PLANS

DELIVERY/ INSTALLATION	MONTHLY COST	MINIMUM RENTING PERIOD	OPTION TO BUY	COST OVER TWO YEARS
free	\$11.95			\$286.80
free	\$15.95	Three months; if less than six you lose half the deposit	After 1 year, you can apply 50% of rental fee up to 70% of purchase price	\$382.80
free	\$17.95			\$430.80
free	\$25.95			\$622.80
free	\$13.95			\$334.80
free	\$17.95			\$430.80
free	\$19.95			\$478.80
free	\$25.95			\$622.80
free	\$29.95			\$718.80
free	\$39.95			\$958.80
free	\$45.95			\$1,102.80
free	\$34.95			\$838.80
free	\$49.95			\$1,198.80
free	\$25 daily ** \$55 weekend \$120 weekly			
\$5	\$55	none	After 18 months it's yours. Early buyout possible	\$990
\$5	\$62	none		\$1,116
\$5	\$65	none		\$1,170
\$5	\$80	none		\$1,440
\$5	\$49	none		\$1,078
\$5	\$61	none		\$1,098
\$5	\$68	none		\$1,224
\$5	\$83	none		\$1,494
\$5	\$82	none		\$1,476
free	\$41.80	one week	24 months	\$1,003.20
free	\$52.95	one week	24 months	\$1,270.80
free	\$59.95	one week	24 months	\$1,438.80
free	\$52.95	one week	24 months	\$1,270.80
free	\$59.95	one week	24 months	\$1,438.80
free	\$71.95	one week	24 months	\$1,726.80
free	\$79.95	one week	24 months	\$1,918.80
\$25	\$14.95	Three months but rates slightly higher if you only rent for 3 months	no	\$358.80
\$25	\$19.95		no	\$478.80
\$30	\$29.95		no	\$718.80
\$25	\$17.95		no	\$430.80
\$25	\$19.95		no	\$478.80
\$25	\$23.95		no	\$574.80
\$30	\$29.95		no	\$718.80
\$30	\$35.95			\$862.80

es, nor all models available from each. Prices and models can vary from franchise to franchise.

le VCR: \$50 daily, \$100 weekend, \$250 weekly.

Compiled by Ed Levine and Petra Lent.

Continued

COMPANY	EQUIPMENT	BRAND	MODEL #	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE	DESCRIPTION	DEPOSIT
RENTACOLOR	TV	Quasar	3931	\$359.95	13" portable	none
			3939	\$489.95	13" w/ remote	none
			5971	\$ open	19" portable	none
			5969	\$619.95	19" w/ remote	none
			9515	\$689.95	25" portable	none
			9924	\$909.95	25" w/ remote	none
	VCR	Magnavox	8315	\$ open	tabletop	none
			8335	\$1,325	tabletop	none
			8377	\$1,425	2-pc. portable	none
		Panasonic	1270	\$ open	tabletop	none
			1470	\$1,295	tabletop	none
			4500	\$1,400	2-pc. portable	none
		Quasar	5011	\$660	tabletop	none
			5310	\$1,325	tabletop	none
			5410	\$1,075	2-pc. portable	none
	Disc player	Hitachi	VIP1000	\$499.95	CED	none
	Videocamera	Magnavox	8248	\$1,200	color	none
		Panasonic	751	\$1,200	color	none
		Quasar	731	\$1,200	color	none

IMPORTANT NOTE: This chart is for comparison only. It does not represent all rental companies.

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DELIVERY/ INSTALLATION	MONTHLY COST	MINIMUM RENTING PERIOD	OPTION TO BUY	COST OVER TWO YEARS
\$25	\$14.95	see previous page	no	\$358.80
\$25	\$17.95		no	\$430.80
\$25	\$19.95		no	\$478.80
\$25	\$23.95		no	\$574.80
\$30	\$29.95		no	\$718.80
\$30	\$35.95		no	\$862.80
\$30	\$34.95		no	\$838.80
\$30	\$44.95		no	\$1,078.80
\$30	\$59.95		no	\$1,318.80
\$30	\$34.95		no	\$838.80
\$30	\$44.95		no	\$1,078.80
\$30	\$59.95		no	\$1,318.80
\$30	\$34.95		no	\$838.80
\$30	\$44.95		no	\$1,078.80
\$30	\$59.95		no	\$1,318.80
\$25	\$15.95		no	\$382.80
\$25	\$42.95		no	\$1,030.80
\$25	\$42.95		no	\$1,030.80
\$25	\$42.95		no	\$1,030.80

or all models available from each. Prices and models can vary from franchise to franchise.

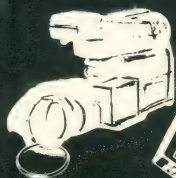
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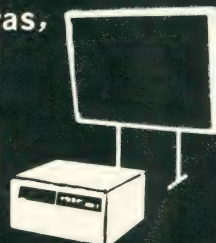
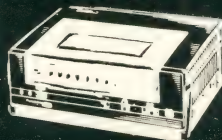


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Then ask about the company's late charge. It varies from one firm to another, but many, including Granada and Rent-A-Center, will charge a fee amounting to $\frac{1}{30}$ of the monthly fee for each day.

Also, you have to find out exactly when the rental period ends. You can rent a videocamera from Granada for the weekend, defined as 6:00 p.m. Friday to 10:00 a.m. Monday. If you stroll in even an hour late, you are charged a late fee.

Additional Charges

Colortyme, Granada and Remco also charge deposit fees. They can range from flat rates starting as low as \$25 (Granada) to a month's rent (Colortyme, Remco), all the way up to Remco's \$550 charge for a videocamera.

What you'll have to find out is under what circumstances you *won't* get your deposit back. At Granada, for example, if you rent for under six months, you lose half your deposit, and even though its deposit fee is quite reasonable, that still could be money wasted.

Involved as all this might seem, you still aren't done. You now have to find out about delivery and installation. If the franchise or local store provides these services, do they charge extra for it? By checking the chart on the previous pages, you can see that there's no hard-and-fast rule. Should you discover that the outlet you're renting from has no policy on installation, double check that the equipment comes with all the proper hookups (RF converter, if necessary, and cables).

Finally, take the time to go over the proper installation

procedures with someone at the store who's qualified to give you advice or with the installer. It's especially important that you understand how to work a camera, or your tape could be ruined.

In a nutshell, the major questions to ask before agreeing to rent are:

- What kind of equipment do I need for the purposes I'm getting it?
- Can I get used equipment? Can I get a discount for renting used equipment?
- What is the minimum rental period? Do I get a lower monthly rate if I keep it longer?
- If I decide to keep the equipment, how much will I actually end up spending?
- Exactly what sort of service am I entitled to on the equipment?
- What day is the equipment due, and by what time on that day?
- What is the late charge if I can't return the equipment by the scheduled time?
- Is there a deposit fee? Under what circumstances will it not be returned?
- Can I have the equipment delivered and installed? Is there an extra fee for this?
- What are the precise operating instructions for the equipment?

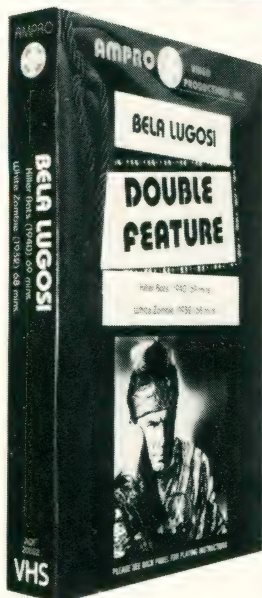
If a franchise gives you satisfactory answers to all these questions, you can go ahead and sign. As you can see, though, renting can be almost as complicated as buying, if you really want to get your money's worth. It can be a good short-term investment for people experimenting with video. And it's an invaluable stop-gap measure for people whose own equipment is on the fritz. But in the long term, it may really only be a solution to the video problems of people who are more concerned about potential foul-ups than the final price tag. □

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TAX-TIME TIPS ON WRITING OFF YOUR GEAR

By James Chiarkas

"I thought he was crazy. I told him we'd never get away with it." That's how Leo Dorf (his real name) of New York City says he reacted when his accountant first suggested that he use his video equipment as a federal income-tax write-off. "I was sure the IRS would never permit the deduction."

Leo Dorf soon discovered something every video fan should learn—before the 14th of this month. The Internal Revenue Service scrutinized his return closely. He was even visited by an auditor. But after a five-hour session with the IRS, he had his deduction. It was slightly smaller than the one he originally claimed, yet still large enough to more than satisfy Dorf.

In most cases, you (like Leo Dorf) are technically required to use your gear at least part of the time on your job or for profit-making purposes in order to qualify for tax deductions on your video equipment. But some money-saving write-offs can be taken by anyone who uses video equipment for pleasure alone.

SALES TAX If you paid any state or local sales tax when purchasing or renting video equipment and accessories, you can deduct it on your annual federal income-tax return. According to the IRS, the sales-tax deduction is one of the most commonly overlooked tax breaks, although sales tax is charged in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

Now, don't go rampaging through the house looking for the receipts for your video gear. It is a good idea to keep the receipts, but you will not necessarily need them to claim the basic sales-tax write-off. However, the IRS will usually grant a more generous write-off if you can prove (with receipts) that you paid a certain

amount of sales tax, which you can calculate with the sales tax tables published on the back of the instruction booklet for the 1040 form.

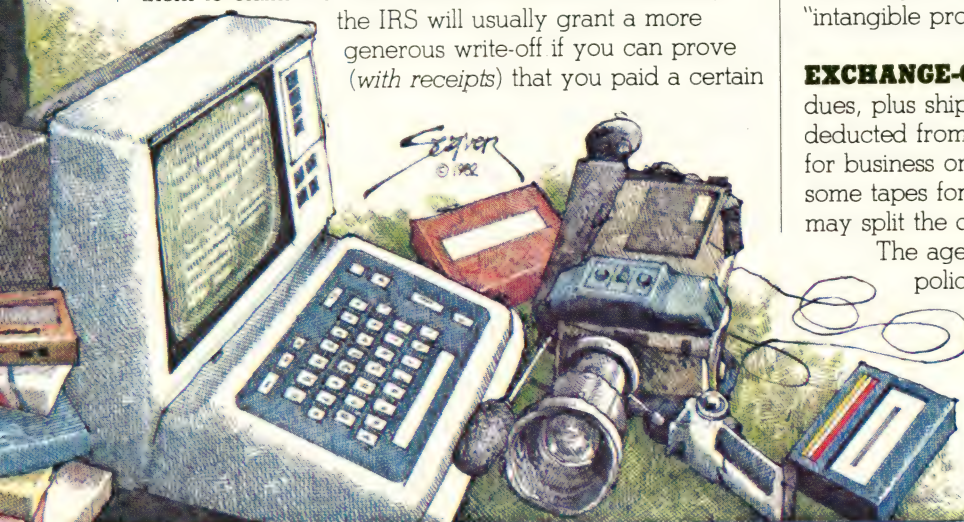
INTEREST COSTS In today's tight-money economy, it's common to purchase fairly expensive goods such as VCRs and other video gear on time or with credit cards. In such cases, the federal government defers some of the cost of credit purchases by letting you deduct interest payments from your taxable income.

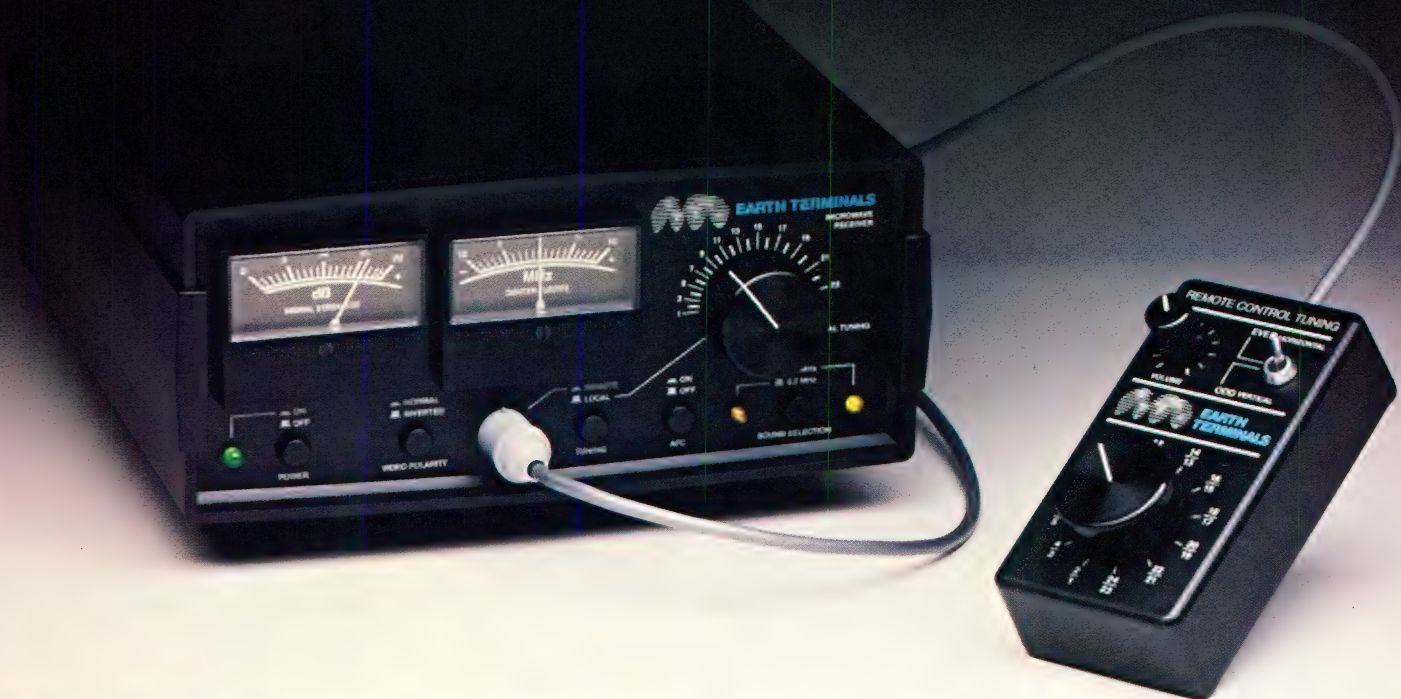
Like the sales tax write-off, this is a deduction available to everyone—even those who use their gear solely for enjoyment. But it's essential to keep a record of all interest payments made during the year. Also remember that according to tax experts including Gary Kahn of Rockland County, NY, the federal tax lords have been examining interest deductions more closely in recent years.

STOLEN OR LOST EQUIPMENT If your video gear is stolen or destroyed in a fire or a natural disaster, you can get some money back from the IRS. The tax gnomes call this a theft or casualty loss. The size of your deduction will depend on whether your VCR, TV set, disc player, videocamera and/or whatever are insured and whether you used them for business, pleasure or both. As for video programs, like most insurance companies the IRS can be tough when it comes to estimating the value of your tape and/or disc collection. For tax calculating purposes, the IRS considers tapes to be "intangible personal property," like copyrights. Coming up with a loss figure that the IRS will accept is often difficult. And it's complicated by the "intangible property" designation.

EXCHANGE-CLUB MEMBERSHIPS Membership dues, plus shipping and handling costs, can be deducted from your income tax if the tapes are used for business or employment purposes. If you exchange some tapes for business and some for pleasure, the IRS may split the deduction with you.

The agency has not yet developed a coherent policy on the exchange-club issue. So it is often up to the officials auditing your tax return to decide how much of a deduction you get. Ellen Murphy of the IRS says that "exchanges of tapes for business purposes are considered 'like-kind transactions.'" This means that the swap is non-taxable. However, if you swap tapes for





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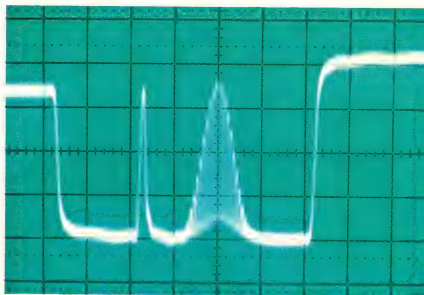
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EARTH TERMINALS

personal use *only*, the exchange is considered a barter transaction—and that *is* taxable.

CABLE-TV CHARGES One clever client of Gary Kahn has been writing off the monthly charges for his cable-TV service for the past five years. So far, he hasn't been audited. However, Kahn feels that his client would survive an audit relatively unscathed because of his job. He works for NFL Products in the marketing department. So he could claim that he needs to watch—and tape—the extensive diet of sports programming on cable TV.

The IRS refused to comment on this situation. But Leon Nad of Price Waterhouse called this tax tactic "a risky play, which should be tried only by those with ironclad substantiation."

REPAIRS AND EQUIPMENT SERVICE

EXPENSES Having your video equipment repaired or serviced can be expensive, especially if your warranty has run out. But you can take some of the sting out of the repair bill by sharing it with the federal government. Once again, though, this is only possible if you can prove that the equipment is being used—at least some of the time—to make a profit or generate income.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS Payments to an insurance company of theft and casualty coverage of your video gear are deductible as ordinary business expenses. If you also use your video setup for personal pleasure (Imagine such a thing!), you'll have to prove how much time you spend on business and how much on having fun.

CONVENTIONS AND TRADE SHOWS You may be able to get the IRS to share the expense of a trip to a video-oriented convention by writing it off as a business expense. Some accountants claim that you are most likely to get away with this type of deduction if you claim that you were developing business contacts at a convention. Yet others feel that it's simply not worth the risk and the headache of justifying travel and lodging expenses to IRS auditors. They cite the well-delineated policy of the agency regarding business travel and entertainment expenditures as a major roadblock.

TAPE RENTAL The same rules that apply to exchange-club memberships essentially apply to tape rentals. If you rented the tape for a business-related purpose, then you can write off the rental charge.

Here's how you might do that. Say your boss and some out-of-town colleagues were coming over for dinner. You rent a tape to show after dinner. According to Murphy, the rental charge may be deductible. Of course, it would carry greater weight with the IRS if your home was also your place of business.

YOUR VIDEO ROOM Some people who work in video-related occupations have designated one room in their homes as video rooms which, at tax time, they use as tax write-offs. If they own a house, cooperative apartment or condominium, they depreciate the room separately from the rest of the house. If they rent, a portion of the rent is deducted as a regular business expense.

You don't have to be a high-rolling wheeler-dealer to make some money on your equipment at tax time. Thanks to the new tax laws, you can get a write-off on most video gear—even if you use it just for fun.

The only catch is that the room cannot be used for personal use at any time. It must be used solely for business and nothing else.

EQUIPMENT RENTAL Rental costs are deductible for those who can justify them as a business-oriented expense.

SALE OF TAPES Selling tapes can be a risky venture. If you sell copyrighted material, you may be hauled into court by the copyright holder. So you might be tempted to not disclose the sale to the IRS. But simply pocketing the money could get you into more trouble. The IRS has the right to tax any income. It does not matter how you made the money. You must declare it.

After considering the risks, if you do sell your tape collection, the profits you make will be taxed as capital gains, not as ordinary income. This can save you a considerable amount of money, depending on the size of the profit.

THE COST OF NEW EQUIPMENT AND

ACCESSORIES We've saved the best news and the most complicated issue for last. Video equipment is by its very nature what the IRS calls "dual use property." Take a videocamera, for example. You can use it to take home movies or to make a training picture, among other things. How does the IRS differentiate between personal use and use for employment or business purposes?

That's a sticky question. When we asked the agency straight out, it came up with a less than clear answer. Business deductions are only permissible when you are pursuing profits or income. If you're self-employed or running a small business on the side, you must show a profit "in any two out of five consecutive years," according to the IRS. But you can ask the agency to wait five years before deciding whether you are in business or not.

If you can convince the IRS that you are in a video-related business or occupation, a lot of very pleasant things can happen to your tax return. First, you can write off at least part of the cost of your VCR, earth station, disc player, TV set and most other equipment. Except for tapes and discs, they are all considered tangible personal property. So you can depreciate them.

Depreciation allows you to recover the cost of your equipment over a certain time period. Under the new tax legislation signed by President Reagan in August, 1981, most pieces of video equipment can be depreciated over a five-year period. Each year, you deduct a fixed percentage of the cost of the equipment from your taxable income. At the end of the five-year

period, you should have "recovered" all the money you spent. If you added features to the equipment, you also get to depreciate the costs of the improvements.

The five-year depreciation setup is the core of what is called the "accelerated cost recovery system." If you bought your VCR before 1980, you can't use this system, but must use the somewhat less favorable depreciation methods mandated by the IRS.

'Hobby Income'

If you sell or dispose of your video equipment before the end of the five-year period, you must pay back to the government some of the deductions you received. You can, however, switch equipment from personal to dual use,

and back again, but only the business-related portion of your gear can be deducted from personal income.

The IRS allows you to offset any money made while engaging in a hobby like video. It calls this money "hobby income." You can use the depreciation mechanism to offset any hobby income left over after other deductions are made.

A far more valuable tool for lowering your tax bill is the investment tax credit. Depreciation and other types of tax deductions shrink your taxable income, putting you in a lower tax bracket. But the investment tax credit actually reduces the amount of tax you have to pay. It is subtracted directly from what you owe the federal government. Plus, it can be used to recover

some of the taxes paid in previous years or to reduce future tax bills.

Tapes and Discs—Nix

The investment tax credit, like depreciation, only applies to tangible personal property, so tapes and discs cannot be depreciated and are not covered by the investment tax credit. The cost of video programs can, however, be deducted as ordinary business expenses.

According to Murphy, video gear is covered by the investment tax credit. But it must be used for at least three years. The first year you own equipment, 10% of its cost is subtracted from tax owed the government. But if you sell the equipment before three years pass, some of the tax credit must be returned to the IRS.

Don't Be Greedy

All this must sound wonderful. But before rushing off to video-ize your tax return, keep in mind that most of the deductions discussed above are only for certain taxpayers. A good rule of thumb is: Don't be greedy.

Before getting in over your head, talk to an accountant about your tax situation. And if you don't like what he or she says, try another accountant. Like experts in any field, accountants agree and disagree on many things.

Gary Kahn, for one, feels that many taxpayers and some tax experts are intimidated by the IRS. But they may have good reason. A tax audit is a harrowing experience. And heavy tax penalties for false deductions can be very painful.

In the end, though, if you discover that most of our suggestions are not appropriate for you, don't despair. You can still deduct the cost of this issue as a tax preparation aid. □

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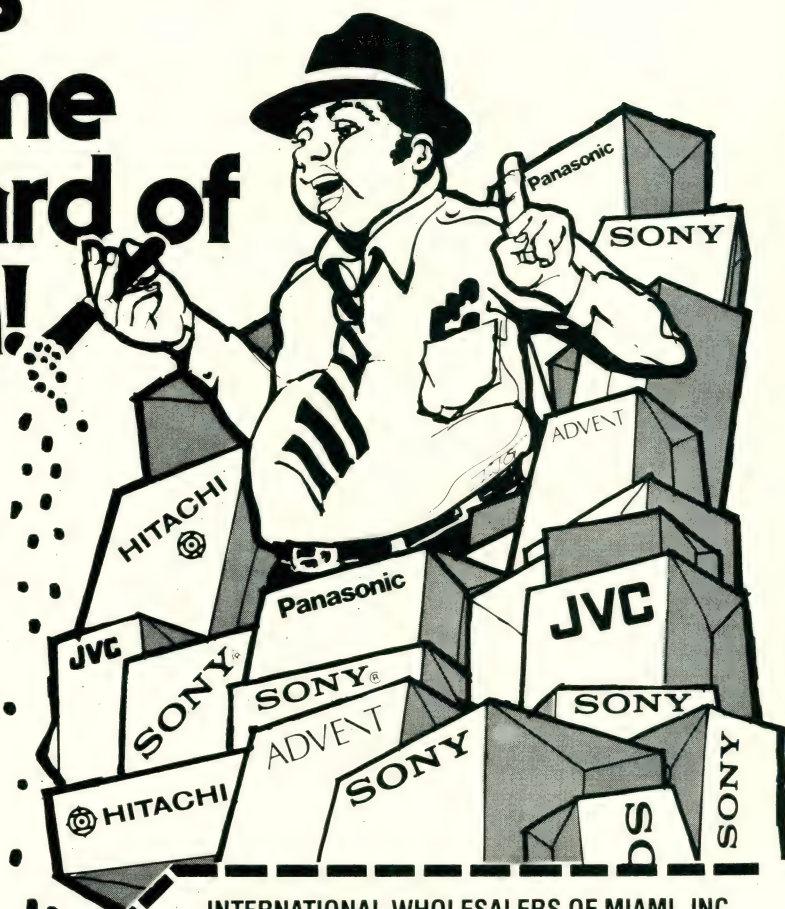
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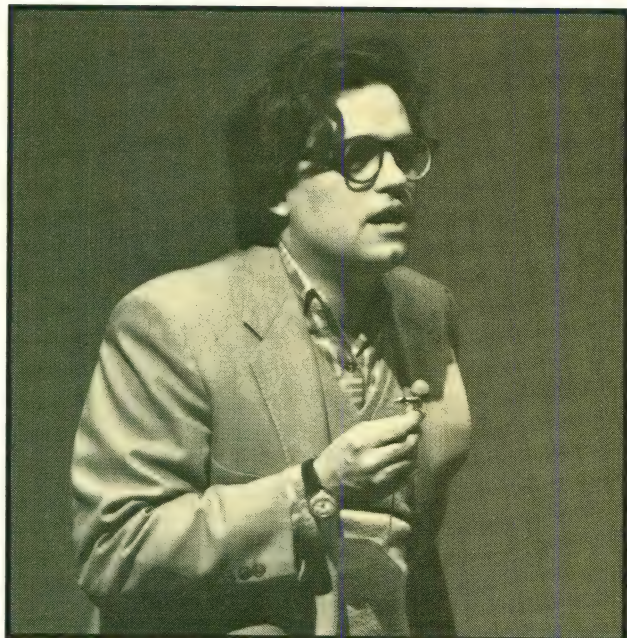
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HOME TAPING TIPS FROM JONATHAN DEMME



As Told to Frank Lovece

When the low-budget movie *Melvin and Howard* became a boxoffice hit and a critical success, then went on to win Academy Awards for best screenplay and best supporting actress (Mary Steenburgen), director Jonathan Demme wasn't too surprised. His baptism of fire in movies—writing and directing low-budget potboilers for independent producer Roger Corman—taught Demme how to craft quality material with a minimum of resources. Although upcoming movie projects with Goldie Hawn and Diane Keaton will have considerably higher budgets than his earlier movies, Demme to this day retains his low-cost roots: “*The Ghost Sisters*,” a Super-8 movie short he worked on after *Melvin and Howard*, is being shown in art-theater circles.

As a dabbler in video, with a black-and-white video music project almost complete, Demme knows of the capabilities and limitations of consumer video gear firsthand. And anyone, he says, can create a variety of moods using nothing more complicated or expensive than natural light.

* * *

I find video wildly interesting, just for the idea of being able to make movies at home—a day in the life of your grandmother, a day in the life of your cat, your building, whatever. I think these kinds of things will be of great interest to kids and for posterity, even for laughs.

There are two things I suggest for successfully taping video movies at home: being unobtrusive and creating moods. And one sort of hinges on the other.

First of all, I think the fewer people in the room, the better, especially behind the camera. The less awareness

of the presence of that machine known as a camera, the better. Try to just quietly enjoy the process of recording, and almost pretend you're not there. You don't even have to let your subjects know when the videocamera's running, just start shooting. Don't formalize the moment of recording. Deformalize it.

The problem for people who want to make a movie, be it a five-minute home movie or an hour-and-a-half feature for theaters, is that there may be an impulse to glory in the act of making it. If you've got this drive or interest or curiosity that leads you to the moment of shooting, you tend to get really excited about the idea that *now we're shooting*, this is it. That's the kind of impulse which, in terms of getting the best results, ought to be curbed.

Try to make the interchange between people as believable and accessible as you can. In other words, even as your subjects communicate with each other, you'll want the emotions they're feeling to be communicated to the viewer. People don't relate to each other in a vacuum; people have moods and so do situations. If you're taping something that's going to be seen an hour or a day or a year later, you have to try to capture the original mood, and two technical ways of doing this are by considering where the camera's placed in relation to where your subjects are, and by lighting.

Rules of Lighting

Camera placement is a huge subject in itself, and there's a lot that's been written on using close-ups for emphasis, and so forth.

Lighting is a little different. Tak Fujimoto, the director of photography I always work with, and I have learned a lot about lighting simply from working, and we have two rules we agree upon in terms of how to light a scene.

One is, unless you have a very good reason not to do so, make sure viewers can see the subject's eyes. The eyes reveal so much about what's going on inside. The second is to light the room in as natural and inviting a way as possible.

You can do this pretty easily with video, since you can often shoot without having to use special photographic lights. You can even romanticize the light in the room a little, or go for an ominous mood by varying the amount of light or by shooting at different times of day.

But keeping the subjects up front and thinking about the way the environment is lit are key factors in achieving and capturing a mood. □

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CRITIC'S CHOICE '50s MOVIE

By Roy Hemming

Just when the "mainstream" Hollywood musical reached new heights of technical mastery and artistic maturity in the 1950s, came the revolution. Two revolutions, as a matter of fact.

The first was technical—the introduction of various new "big-screen" projection systems (such as CinemaScope, Todd-AO, VistaVision and so on), a brief fling with 3D, plus the development of stereo and other multitrack sound systems. Movie musicals adapted eagerly and relatively easily to these changes, though in some cases it meant expensive reshooting and other switches midstream in production. Later, when the time came for these musicals to make the transition to TV screens and video formats, the different shapes and scopes created a slew of *other* problems for transfer technicians—and for viewers.

The other '50s revolution went straight to the artistic jugular. Beginning in the mid '50s, rock 'n' roll not only dramatically changed the nature of the recording industry and radio, but also spawned a whole new genre of movie musicals. Another Critic's Choice in a forthcoming issue will take an in-depth look at rock musicals, but this month I want to keep the focus on the heirs to the musicals of the '30s and '40s that I surveyed in the October and December '81 issues.

The Peak—and the Pits

A good argument can be made that the style developed over the years in the musicals of Busby Berkeley, Fred Astaire, MGM's "Freed unit" and a few others reached a peak in such '50s classics as *Singin' in the Rain*, *Funny Face*, *The Band Wagon*, *Gigi* and *A Star Is Born*. At the same time, some of the all-time worst musical "dogs" also came out of the '50s (*The Girl Rush* and *April in Paris*, to name just two). In between were dozens of often expensive productions, usually with talented people behind and in front of the cameras, afflicted with any number of problems that ended up making the pictures disappointing.

By the '50s, virtually all musicals were in color and, in terms of production values, were better designed, better lit, better photographed, better recorded, better almost everything—except not always better creatively. Sometimes they strained too much to be bigger and better than any predecessors—or their own Broadway precedents. The Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals suffered the most in this respect, especially *Carousel* (1957) and *South Pacific* (1958), as did Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* (1955). So, too, some lavish remakes, such as *The Merry Widow* (1952) and *Lovely to Look At* (1952)—the latter an especially pale reflection (despite its color) of 1935's *Roberta*. Musical remakes of hit movie comedies and dramas generally didn't fare much better, merely proving that you need more than a dash of song and dance to make a *good* movie musical. Several biographical movies about '30s and '40s musicians—including *With a Song in My Heart* ('52), *The Glenn Miller Story* ('54) and *The Benny Goodman Story* ('55)—didn't do much to slow the popularization of rock, either.

Still, the best '50s musicals not only survived the rock onslaught but keep on surviving today. More musicals from



MUSICALS



Gene Kelly sloshes and frolics his way through a classic downpour in *Singin' in the Rain*. Judy Garland (below right) belts out "The Man That Got Away" in *A Star Is Born*. And Donald O'Connor (below left) kicks up his heels in *Call Me Madam*.



the '50s have been released on videocassettes or videodiscs than those from the '30s and '40s combined. Some of them definitely belong in the collections of video musical buffs. But in many cases, excerpts will do—and provide some of the most rewatchable video material of all. Quite a few excerpts are in MGM's two great compilation features *That's Entertainment* (1974) and *That's Entertainment Part II* (1976), both available on videocassette from MGM/CBS Home Video. For those who like to use their VCRs to tape their own compilations from TV, taping cues are included in the following rundown of my choices of the '50s' most memorable movie-musical highpoints.

• **AN AMERICAN IN PARIS** (1951) When this won its year's "Best Picture" Oscar (beating out *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *A Place in the Sun*) plus five other Academy Awards, some contended that at long last the original movie musical had been critically "recognized" as a major "art form." Since then, however, more and more critics have put down this movie as overrated. True, its plot is cliché-ridden and its view of Parisian bohemia is strictly Hollywood. But the musical numbers hold up wonderfully. Two of the best are included in *That's Entertainment Part II*: "Our Love Is Here to Stay," a hauntingly romantic *pas de deux* by Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron along the banks of the Seine, and "I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise," staged *a la* the Folies Bergère or Ziegfeld's *Follies* (with plumed chorines) and ingratiatingly sung by French *boulevardier* Georges Guitary. The finale, the "American in Paris Ballet," to a rearranged version of Gershwin's score, was a blockbuster innovation in its day—an 18-minute blend of pop and classical styles, choreographed by Gene Kelly, designed and directed by Vincente Minnelli, with decor based imaginatively on the works of Dufy, Utrillo, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec and Rousseau. The ballet is only excerpted (about five minutes' worth) in *That's Entertainment*, so if you want the whole works you'll have to tape it yourself. (Cue: Kelly, looking down from a balcony at the Beaux Arts Ball, watches Caron and Guitary drive away.) Another tapeable: "By Strauss," a rarely done Gershwin gem that's sung with a perfect blend of verve and camp by Kelly, Guitary and Oscar Levant, and including a charming dance by Kelly with an old lady (Mary Jones). (Cue: Kelly says to Levant, "Evidently, the man doesn't like jazz.") The complete movie is available on videocassette from MGM/CBS Home Video and on videodisc from RCA SelectaVision (CED format).

• **SHOW BOAT** (1951) The sets, costumes and overall production design for MGM's remake were far more spectacular than Universal's classic 1936 version—and MGM claimed at the time that the show boat itself was the largest movable prop ever made for a motion picture. What got shortchanged, however, was the spirit of the earlier version—thanks (or, rather, no thanks) to George Sidney's listless direction and a cast (Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ava Gardner, William Warfield, Joe E. Brown) that was just no match for the '36 one (Irene Dunne, Allan Jones, Helen Morgan, Paul Robeson, Charles Winninger). But—and for video buffs this is an important but—since the '36 is unavailable because of rights problems, at least a few scenes from the '51 remake belong in any movie-musical collection, if only because of *Show Boat's* stature as an American classic. There's a five-minute "potpourri-style" sequence in *That's Entertainment*. But home tapers may prefer a few others, especially the complete "Ol'

Man River" as sung by Warfield to some of the movie's most mistily atmospheric photography. (Cue: As Gardner and her lover depart the show boat, she says to Warfield: "Keep ridin' the ol' river, Joe." Warning: Don't stop after Warfield's first chorus ends in a big flourish, for he soon comes back for an even more moving second chorus.) This whole sequence, incidentally, was directed by Roger Edens during an illness of George Sidney, and makes one wish Edens had directed more of the picture.

• **SINGIN' IN THE RAIN** (1952) For me, this ranks with '35's *Top Hat* as one of the two best original movie musicals ever. It's got everything—great songs (the cream of the Brown-Freed '30s catalogue), terrific dances (co-directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen), a "fun" book (by Comden and Green) that spoofs movie-musicals themselves, and a wonderful cast: Kelly, Donald O'Connor, Debbie Reynolds, Cyd Charisse and the unforgettable Jean Hagen (in a role originally planned for Judy Holliday before she clicked in *Born Yesterday*). Fully 60 of its 103-minutes' running-time are given over to musical numbers! The two best are included in *That's Entertainment*: (1) the classic title number, in which Kelly gloriously sloshes and frolics his way through a downpour; (2) "Make 'Em Laugh," a frantically acrobatic and side-splittingly comic song-and-dance by O'Connor. Parts of the "Broadway Melody Ballet" are included in both *That's Entertainment* I and II—a minute of the finale in the first and a longer sequence in Part II, including as sultry a *pas de deux* as Kelly and Charisse ever danced. One other excerpt worth taping: The warmly tender Kelly-Reynolds *pas de deux* to "You Were Meant for Me." (Cue: As they walk onto an empty soundstage, Kelly says: "This is the proper setting!") But, perhaps more than any other '50s musical, this is the one you should have complete—either on videocassette (MGM/CBS) or on videodisc (RCA Selecta-Vision, CED format).

• **CALL ME MADAM** (1953) This lively, impudent, "topical" musical comedy was adapted from a Broadway hit that broadly spoofed Harry Truman's shipping off Washington hostess Perle Mesta (reportedly on his wife's orders) as ambassador to Liechtenstein (here fictionalized as Lichtenburg). 20th Century-Fox had the good sense to keep the best of the Broadway original—including star Ethel Merman in a tailor-made role—if not all of Irving Berlin's songs (eight of the show's 13) or all the nippy Lindsay-Crouse dialogue. Most tapeable: (1) Merman's opening "I'm the Hostess With the Mostest on the Ball," belted out with her typical blend of good-natured humor and unabashed brassiness. (Cue: Right after Merman's swearing-in ceremony, Donald O'Connor asks her how she got her appointment.) (2) The wonderfully exhilarating, romantically lit dance that Donald O'Connor and Vera-Ellen do to "It's a Lovely Day Today," choreographed by Robert Alton. (Cue: After the "International Rag" number, O'Connor dances Vera-Ellen out into the garden.) The show's best song, "You're Just in Love" (with one of Berlin's cleverest countermelody choruses), is only routinely staged—twice.

• **THE BAND WAGON** (1953) Loosely based on a 1931 Broadway show that Fred Astaire had done, this keeps only five of the original 17 Schwartz-Dietz songs but adds eight other good ones by the same team, plus a thoroughly updated book (by Comden and Green) about a declining movie star (Astaire) trying to get a new Broadway career underway. There are many "in" bits, such as sly digs at Broadway's snob-bishness about movies and Jack Buchanan's broad spoofing of an overly artistic director not entirely unlike the movie's own director, Vincente Minnelli. The two *That's Entertainment* features take their title from the one new song Schwartz and Dietz wrote for the movie—and both include choice excerpts. "Dancing in the Dark," one of Astaire's all-time airiest romantic dances (with Cyd Charisse) is in Part I, and "Triplets," unforgettably knee-danced by Astaire, Buchanan and Nanette Fabray, is in Part II. Not included in either one and most tapeable: "A Shine on My Shoes," in which Astaire first shows

how he can make his feet work magic even while he's sitting down—and then cuts loose with some great buck-and-wing hoofing. (Cue: A minute or so after Astaire enters a game arcade, he nearly trips over shoeshine man LeRoy Daniels.) Ballet fans may also want to tape one of Cyd Charisse's few purely classical ballet turns in the movies, danced to Schwartz's "Beggar's Waltz." (Cue: Immediately following a close-up of a theater poster promoting Gabrielle Gerard's appearance.) The complete movie is available on prerecorded videocassette from MGM/CBS Home Video.

• **GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES** (1953) For all its fame as Marilyn Monroe's best musical, it's the brunette who comes close to stealing the show—Jane Russell, who even gets top billing. Marilyn's performance has been definitively analyzed by Norman Mailer in another Critic's Choice article (*VR*, Feb. '82). But Jane is also a knockout—and the Russell-Monroe duets *require* video so that you can freeze-frame and rewind so as to watch Marilyn one time, Jane the next. The most tapeable numbers: (1) "We're Just Two Little Girls from Little Rock," sung by Marilyn and Jane in form-fitting, glitteringly sequined, flame-red gowns at the movie's very beginning, *before* the main titles. (2) "Ain't There Anyone Here for Love?," playfully sung by Jane as she cavorts with the men's Olympic gymnastic team. (Cue: The coach's whistle summons the team to shipboard practice as Jane talks to them about their 9:00 curfew.) (3) "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," the ultimate in golddigging cynicism, done with just the right touch of vamping irony by Marilyn, and then recapped by Jane in a wildly camped parody of Marilyn! (Cue: As a Paris nightclub show begins, the camera pans to a huge overhead chandelier—made up of very human showgirls!) The complete movie is available on prerecorded videocassette from 20th Century-Fox Video (formerly Magnetic Video).

• **A STAR IS BORN** (1954) Judy Garland gives the performance of her life in this remake of a popular '37 Janet Gaynor movie (itself based, in turn, on a '32 Constance Bennett drama, *What Price Hollywood?*)—about the devastating personal price of Hollywood stardom. Not only is Garland at her vocal peak, with a tailor-made Harold Arlen score, but she also turns in an acting performance that makes the most of both her serious and comedic talents. James Mason is also superb as the actor on the skids whom she loves—and Moss Hart's screenplay and George Cukor's direction are far more subtly shaded than their earlier counterparts. Some 20 minutes of the picture got whopped off a few weeks after the premiere, but let's hope someday the complete version will turn up again (Warners claims the cut footage is lost or destroyed), because it has several marvelous comedy scenes that balance the unrelieved gravity of the picture's last third, plus a good musical number ("Lose That Long Face") that gives more impact to the dramatic scene that precedes it. But even in its present form, this is one of the all-time great musicals. Most tapeable: (1) "The Man That Got Away," in which Garland sings her heart out in what is arguably her single best "strictly singing" movie sequence. (Cue: Mason enters a club whose blue-lit sign says "Bleu-Bleu.") (2) "Born in a Trunk," a lengthy but brilliant musical-comedy *tour de force* that traces a singer's rise from spotlight-stealing kid to Broadway star. This sequence, incidentally, was directed by Garland's old MGM cohort, Roger Edens. (Cue: At a sneak preview, Garland takes a bow following the finale of "Swanee" and the camera comes in for a close-up.) (3) "Somewhere There's a Someone," a nifty sendup of '40s movie musicals (including some of Garland's own). (Cue: Garland, about to describe her day at the studio to Mason, puts a record on the phonograph.)

• **OKLAHOMA!** (1955) Rodgers' and Hammerstein's original Broadway musical of '43 achieved such landmark status in terms of theatrical innovation that its screen transfer in the '50s seemed to demand something as cinematically innovative—or at least super-duper. In opening up the action to the real outdoors of the story, a new big-screen process called Todd-AO

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And now there's The Quest For The Rings™ from Odyssey². It's the first in our new Master Strategy Series™ of video games that combine computer technology, your TV set and an advanced game board to transport you to a startlingly realistic alternate world.

Odyssey² Video game fun. Computer keyboard challenge. All for the price of an ordinary video game. It's waiting for you now, at your Odyssey² dealer.

Odyssey² games include:

The Quest For The Rings • Speedway* • Spin-Out* • Crypto-Logic* • Las Vegas Blackjack • Armored Encounter • Subchase • Football • Bowling • Basketball • Math-A-Magic • Echo • Computer Intro • Matchmaker • Logix • Buzzword • Baseball • Computer Golf • Cosmic Conflict • Take The Money And Run • I've Got Your Number • Invaders From Hyperspace • Thunderball • Showdown in 2001 A.D. • War Of Nerves • Alpine Skiing • Helicopter Rescue • Out Of This World • Hockey • Soccer • Dynasty • Volleyball • Electronic Table Soccer • Pocket Billiards • Pachinko • Blockout • Breakdown • Casino Slot Machine • UFO • Alien Invaders—Plus.

*Included with original Odyssey² purchase.



The excitement of a game.
The mind of a computer.



Videotec

A report on video from Scotch® Videocassettes. Series eight. Number one.

Pre-recording checklist ensures better playback.

Thousands of new VCR owners are finding out that there's more to successful off-the-air video tape recording than "Push Play and Record."

One system that has proven valuable for many is to construct a checklist to help minimize human error.

This is not just a mental checklist. It is typed out or clearly printed and kept in a clear plastic folder near the VCR. That way, the last few minutes of countdown before a program are controlled. Not chaotic.

Here is a sampling of items that might be included on your checklist:

Tune it in. If your VCR isn't tuned properly, you can count on disappointing reproduction. Also, fine-tune channel 3 or 4 on your TV. The instructions are in your manual. Condense them and put them on your checklist.

Unplug the remote control. Hundreds of hours of important recordings have been lost because the remote says "Pause" while the VCR says "Record." Play it safe. Unplug the remote until "all systems are go" and then plug it in as you take the front row seat.

Allow time. You know how much time you can record at a given speed. Make sure the length of the videocassette allows for the time you need. You don't want to get to the last ten minutes of a movie and run out of tape.

Tension is important. Fast forward a new tape before using it and then rewind it for more uniform tension and a better picture.

Start right. Push Pause. Then Play and Record. Then release Pause when you're ready to record. You'll start fast. And clean.

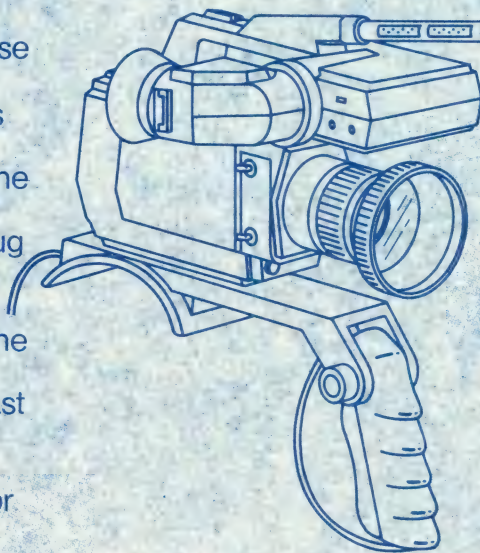
Techniques for shooting video home movies.

Whether you already have a video camera, or hope to get one in the future, you'll probably be shooting video home movies. To get the best results, here are a few basic pointers to keep in mind:

1. Tell the people involved beforehand. With their cooperation, you'll get better footage. They may even be able to suggest some close-ups, scenes or different angles you hadn't considered.

2. Take time to prepare. Locate wall plugs in the rooms where you plan to shoot. Use extension cords to distribute the power drain from lights more evenly. Make sure you have enough tape.

3. Shoot a short test and play it back before you begin. Check focus, lighting and composition. A few minutes spent on a pre-test can make all the difference in your final result.



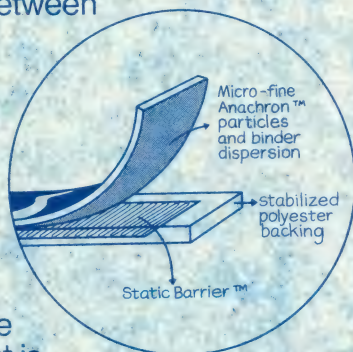
Scotch Memo

4. Protect your camera from the sun. Avoid shooting directly into the sun or any other extremely bright light which could burn out a camera tube. A replacement can cost around \$100.

Scotch Static Barrier™ minimizes dropouts.

Dust is a major enemy of video recording tape. When it gets between the tape and the heads, you get dropouts—white lines or flashes in the picture.

The Scotch Static Barrier™ helps prevent dust from accumulating on videotape. So the tape-to-head contact is maximized. You get true color and clarity—instead of irritating dropouts.



Audio dubbing device.



Irritated with network voice-over promos at the end of a program?

Try doing your own voice dub over them. Just plug a regular set of stereo headphones into the microphone jack. Then talk into them. When you replay the tape, you'll hear something

a lot more interesting than the next Wednesday night movie promo.

Networks get true color and clarity from Scotch Video Tape.

All three major networks use Scotch Video Tape. And we make Scotch Videocassettes for home use just as carefully as the tape we make for the networks. It's not exactly the same. For one thing, network tape is wider. But we start with the same basic ferric oxide particles. It's made by the same processes, on the same machinery and to the same exacting quality control standards.

So if you want true color and clarity that lasts, use the brand of tape the networks use.



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3M

(after its backer, Mike Todd) was introduced with much hoopla—but with only partial success. Color matching from scene to scene was problematical, as was occasional lens distortion in long shots. These problems were mostly corrected when 20th Century-Fox re-released the movie in CinemaScope in '56 (the version in general circulation today). Practically everything else came off beautifully—with considerable fidelity to the simple, sunny, wholesome spirit of the original. (In other words, the corn remains as high as an elephant's eye.) Rodgers and Hammerstein supervised the movie production themselves, with Fred Zinnemann directing. Original designer Oliver Smith and choreographer Agnes DeMille were enlisted, plus a congenial cast: Shirley Jones, Gordon MacRae, Charlotte Greenwood, Gene Nelson, Gloria Grahame, Rod Steiger, and dancers Bambi Lynn, James Mitchell, Marc Platt, Jenny Workman and Kelly Brown. Tapeables include: (1) "People Will Say We're in Love," the show's great romantic ballad, sung by MacRae and Jones. (Cue: As they walk in an orchard, MacRae says to her, "It's amazing how these ugly rumors start.") (2) The "Out of My Dreams" ballet sequence, Agnes DeMille's trendsetting blend of Freudian allegory and "American" ballet style. (Cue: Jones settles down in a porch chair and starts to read the label on an elixir bottle.) The complete movie is available on a prerecorded videocassette (recropped from the CinemaScope release) from MGM/CBS Home Video.

• **THE KING AND I** (1956) First 20th Century-Fox made a good, straight dramatic version of *Anna and the King of Siam* in '46. Then Rodgers and Hammerstein made a hit Broadway musical of it. Then Fox completed the circle, turning it into an even better and more lavish movie musical—and also turning Yul Brynner (repeating his Broadway role) into the first completely bald-headed international star. He's great as the 19th-century royal autocrat who learns to modernize some of his ways from his children's English governess, played with the right mixture of charm and bite by Deborah Kerr (with Marni Nixon dubbing her singing voice). Most tapeable: (1) Jerome Robbins' stagebound but ingenious ballet "The Little House of Uncle Thomas," a droll reinterpretation of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" from the Siamese point of view. (Cue: The ballet is announced at a big state banquet and preceded by Oriental gongs.) (2) "Shall We Dance?," a "spontaneous" polka danced by Brynner and Kerr. (Cue: Kerr begins to reminisce about her first dance as a young girl.) The complete movie is available on prerecorded videocassette (recropped from the original CinemaScope) from 20th Century-Fox Video. Note: The original color prints, made at a time of changing color-processing techniques, have been more afflicted by color "aging" and deterioration than those of almost any other major musical, and thus print quality of TV showings can vary drastically, depending on the source.

• **FUNNY FACE** (1957) This took just the title of an old ('28) Fred and Adele Astaire show and four of its Gershwin songs, and then appended a completely different story—to emerge as one of the pinnacles of Astaire's movie career. The story is a variation on *Pygmalion*, set in the glamorous world of high-fashion magazines, with Astaire as a Richard Avedon-type photographer, Audrey Hepburn as the gamin-esque bookworm he transforms into a top model, and the marvelous Kay Thompson as their jet-propelled editor. The picture's visual

style is bold and stunning—with probably the most striking color images ever seen in a musical, some of them designed to evoke the chic-est trends of '50s photography. Producer Roger Edens and director Stanley Donen transported key members of MGM's former "Freed unit" over to Paramount to give everything that extra dimension of finesse and pizzazz. Most tapeable: (1) "Think Pink," the delirious opening number in which Thompson sees her latest editorial brainchild exploding beyond pink clothes to pink shampoo, pink toothpaste, pink everything—all in a clever mixture of dance and photo-montage. (Cue: Soon after the title, Thompson says to her secretary, "Take an editorial—to the women of America!") (2) "How Long Has This Been Going On?," enchantingly sung by Hepburn (that's her own voice, unlike the one in '64's *My Fair Lady*) with just the right blend of intimacy and wonderment. (Cue: After Astaire first kisses her and leaves the bookstore, Hepburn puts on a wide-brimmed hat.) (3) "Bonjour, Paris," in which Astaire, Hepburn and Thompson sing and dance their ways around Paris—with some of the '50s' best use of split-screen images. (Cue: As soon as the three of them arrive in Paris and check into their hotel.) (4) The dreamy "He Loves and She Loves," as Astaire and Hepburn dance romantically around a pond and a mist-covered lawn. (Cue: After Hepburn's been photographed as a bride outside a countryside church, she says to Astaire, "I love Paris... and I love you.") There's also Thompson's trademarked "Clap Yo' Hands" song-and-dance turn with Astaire (at an Existentialist bash they crash), and Hepburn's jazzy sweater-and-jeans-clad dance in a smoke-filled bistro with two beatnik partners (choreographed by Eugene Loring). Come to think of it, next to *Singin' in the Rain*, this is the '50s musical you should have complete—and until Paramount (or someone) gets around to releasing it on videodisc or cassette you'll have to tape it yourself from TV.

• **THE GIRL MOST LIKELY** (1957) Never heard of this one? It's the "sleeper" on my list—and, admittedly, it belongs more for historical reasons than for purely musical merit. But there *are* merits to the picture. This was the last musical to be made at RKO Radio (birthplace of the Astaire-Rogers classics) before the studio went bankrupt—and the first movie musical to be completely choreographed by Gower Champion (previously he had directed only his own dance routines), several years before he made Broadway history with *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Hello Dolly*. The movie is a musical remake of a '40 Ginger Rogers comedy *Tom, Dick and Harry*. It's about a starry-eyed young woman (Jane Powell) who can't make up her mind between Cliff Robertson, Keith Andes and Tommy Noonan. The score is by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane (*Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Best Foot Forward*). Most tapeable: (1) "I'm from Balboa," a bright and breezy ensemble number of the sort Champion did better than almost anyone else, sung and danced by several dozen energetic young performers led by Powell and Kelly Brown (then a featured dancer with American Ballet Theater). (Cue: At a beachside counter, Powell asks someone, "Where are you from?") (2) "Mexican Clothes," a cheerful, colorful spoof of many things—from Busby Berkeley's "The Lady in Red" number in '35's *In Caliente* to Latin color schemes and dances. (Cue: As Andes and Brown turn a corner into a Tijuana marketplace, they pass a stroller in a big sombrero and purple pants. Andes asks, "Who's his exterior designer?")

• **PAL JOEY** (1957) This is one of those movies that should have been better than it is—but, then, maybe I'm prejudiced, for I think the original stage version ranks among the two or three greatest musicals ever. Columbia put together a good cast (Frank Sinatra as Joey, Rita Hayworth as the gracefully aging Vera, Kim Novak as the young "mouse") and even dared—for the '50s—to keep much of the John O'Hara story about a two-bit entertainer and the women he "uses." But then Columbia proceeded to dump most of the original Rodgers-Hart score (one of their best), substituting instead some better-known Rodgers-Hart standards from other shows. Some of the





numbers are worth taping, if only for the special chemistry that both Frank and Rita were able to bring to the material. Most tapeable: (1) "The Lady Is a Tramp," as sung by Sinatra to a first stunned and then amused Hayworth. The song was written for '37's *Babes in Arms* but works perfectly in the *Pal Joey* context (the only one of the interpolated songs to do so, in fact). (Cue: Hayworth returns to Joey's club after hours and asks him to sing.) (2) "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," sung by Hayworth (dubbed by Jo Ann Greer), with lyrics considerably laundered from Hart's original—though Hayworth manages to imply

lots more than she's actually mouthing. (Cue: Hayworth's French maid awakens her and opens the blinds.) A prerecorded videocassette was formerly available from Time-Life, but Vestron (which has inherited most of the Time-Life titles) was uncertain at presstime whether or not *Pal Joey* would be re-released under its new label.

• **THE PAJAMA GAME** (1958) In contrast to *Pal Joey*, this not only kept virtually all the Broadway score (by Adler-Ross) but the show's co-writer and director, George Abbott, was made the movie's co-director with Stanley Donen—and most of the members of the Broadway cast repeated their roles: John Raitt, Eddie Foy Jr., Reta Shaw and (most felicitously) the dance trio of Carol Haney, Buzz Miller and Peter Gennaro. The major Hollywood change, aside from opening up the action to outdoor spaces where appropriate, was Doris Day in the lead role—and she is perfect in it. She plays the spirited leader of a pajama factory's grievance committee who battles and then falls in love with the company superintendent (Raitt). The labor relations background was fresh and different for a musical-comedy, but even fresher were Bob Fosse's inventive dance numbers. Most tapeable: (1) "Once-a-Year Day," a rollickingly acrobatic picnic-fun-and-games dance sequence. (Cue: Raitt asks Day as they arrive at the picnic grounds, "Do you like me?") (2) "There Once Was a Man," an urbane spoof of the '50s rage for hillbilly songs, breezily sung by Day and Raitt. (Cue: Soon after the song, "Small Talk," as Day and Raitt talk on the front porch.) (3) "Steam Heat," one of Fosse's all-time best numbers, with all his overstylized choreographic trademarks, danced with marvelous mock seriousness by Haney, Miller and Gennaro. (Cue: The number, on stage, is introduced at a union rally.)

• **GIGI** (1958) Another Oscar-winner in the Best Picture category—and probably the most elegantly sumptuous French sex comedy ever made in America. Just about everything is outstanding: direction (Vincente Minnelli), screenplay (*My Fair Lady*'s Alan Jay Lerner, from a Colette story), music (*My Fair Lady*'s Frederick Loewe), scoring (Andre Previn and Conrad Salinger), costumes and production design (Cecil Beaton), color cinematography (Joseph Ruttenberg) and performances (Leslie Caron, Maurice Chevalier, Louis Jourdan, Hermione Gingold). Under producer Arthur Freed (his penultimate MGM musical), everything meshes beautifully—for a wry romp through the wickedly sophisticated *fin de siècle* Parisian world of rakes and courtesans, until a young girl (Caron) being trained for a life of fashionable sin turns out to have rebellious moral ideas of her own. Most tapeable: (1) "Thank Heavens for Little Girls," sung by Chevalier with a twinkle in both his voice and his eyes. (Cue: About a minute after the opening titles, Chevalier spots Caron cavorting with some friends.) Chevalier

also reprises the song for the movie's finale, which is even more visually impressive. (2) "I Remember It Well," the most charming "old-timers" duet that anyone's ever done, sung just perfectly by Chevalier and Gingold. (Cue: As they sit at the seaside, Chevalier says to Gingold, "We had good times, too, didn't we?") "I Remember It Well" is included in *That's Entertainment Part II*, and part of "Thank Heavens" in *That's Entertainment*. The complete movie is available in a prerecorded videocassette from MGM/CBS Home Video.

• **WEST SIDE STORY** (1961) Though technically not a '50s release, *West Side Story* is very much a '50s musical—perhaps the most innovative of them all in both its original '57 Broadway version and its Oscar-winning '61 Hollywood version. It is in many ways a logical culmination of the blending of song and dance as developed through '40s and '50s movies—for if it weren't for what Astaire, Kelly, Agnes DeMille and a few others had paved the way for, the jolt of "macho" youth gangs breaking into ballet steps would have produced laughs instead of establishing an expressive screen style. Jerome Robbins (co-directing with Robert Wise) expanded his original Broadway concepts cinematically but in a deliberately stylized way—mixing ballet with realistic action, in both street and studio locations, to tell the story and create a mood of tension and tragedy. Arthur Laurents' modern variation on *Romeo and Juliet* attempts some serious points about ethnic conflict in '50s New York, giving the pop musical what some critics of the time rightly called its "thinking head." All of the original Leonard Bernstein-Stephen Sondheim score is kept in the movie, although two songs ("Cool" and "Dear Officer Krupke") are used in different places—sensibly so. The secondary roles (George Chakiris, Rita Moreno, Russ Tamblyn, Eliot Feld) are cast more believably than the two leads (Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer, dubbed respectively by Marni Nixon and Jim Bryant), but it's essentially an ensemble production—and it packs a dramatic wallop from the first scene to the last.

Most tapeable: (1) The long opening sequence, beginning with a skyview of Manhattan (shot straight down), through the "Jet Song" sung by the white gang as they cruise the streets. (2) The "Tonight Quintet" (the *second* version of the song "Tonight"), in which Bernstein and Sondheim use an old operatic device in a strictly pop way for the movie's vocal highlight. (Cue: Right after the Wood-Beymer duet to "One Hand, One Heart," the two gangs get ready for the rumble.) (3) "America," a teasing, half-bitter, half-comic commentary on the treatment of Puerto Ricans in America, sung and danced by Moreno, Chakiris and their friends. (Cue: Chakiris taunts Moreno at a rooftop gathering, saying, "Look, now she's queer



for Uncle Sam!") The lyrics of this last song alone, plus the style of Bernstein's music and Robbins' dance, show how far the American movie musical had come in just a little over 30 years. It marked quite an achievement—unsurpassed by any other genre to then. The complete movie is available on videocassette from 20th Century-Fox Video. □

(Top above) Hayworth, Sinatra in *Pal Joey*. (Far left) Astaire, Hepburn in *Funny Face*. (Above) Russ Tamblyn, other dancers in *West Side Story*.

THE 1982 VIDEO REVIEW **AWARDS**



BEST MADE-FOR-VIDEO PROGRAM



ELEPHANT PARTS (*Pacific Arts Video*) "Quite simply the funniest, most visually stunning piece of original video programming yet to be produced for the video audience. . . . With all the hoopla that's surrounded Michael Nesmith's involvement in video, we might easily have expected too much from this first effort. But Nesmith has come through with flying colors—a tribute to his vision and courage in persisting on the cutting edge of the video revolution." —Ed Levine (September '81 VR)

BEST INTERACTIVE VIDEO PROGRAM



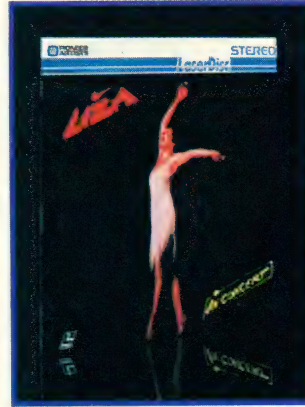
HOW TO WATCH PRO FOOTBALL (*Optical Programming Associates*) "An outstanding videodisc seminar geared to enhance a viewer's appreciation of what he or she is looking at, whether it's 'live' action on the field, or on the tube at home. The first of its kind for sports addicts [with] some of the greatest tutorial talents on the gridiron." —Pete Coutros (April '82 VR)

BEST MUSIC PROGRAM: ROCK



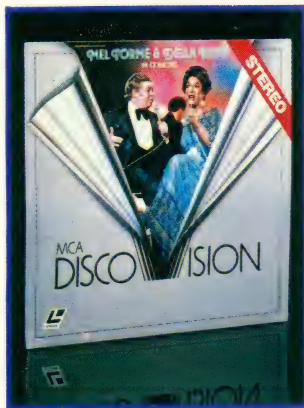
SHADOWS AND LIGHT (*Pioneer Artists*) "Joni Mitchell interlaced 'live' footage with both original visuals and old film clips meant to dramatize and complement [her] music. The result is a uniquely video creation specifically designed for the intimacy and technical virtuosity of the videodisc medium." —David Hajdu (February '82 VR)

BEST MUSIC PROGRAM: POP



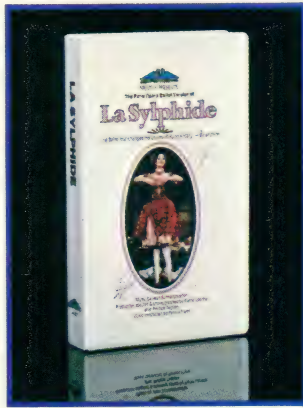
LIZA MINNELLI IN CONCERT (*Pioneer Artists*) "[Liza] makes you feel she absolutely loves every note she's singing. [And] the clarity and depth of the stereo soundtrack make you realize what we've been missing from the usual run of videotaped musical performances. If this is the video music future, it's certainly exciting." —Roy Hemming (July '81 VR)

BEST MUSIC PROGRAM: JAZZ



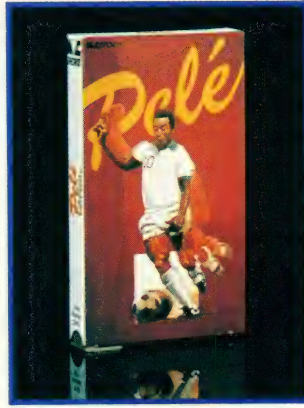
DELLA REESE AND MEL TORME IN CONCERT (*MCA Videodisc*) "After the casual melange of TV clips and 'soundies' that have made up so much of the jazz videocassette offerings to date, this disc comes as a revelation. Visually, the color is gorgeous. [The sound has] astonishingly full presence. And the two excellent performers are in very good form." —John S. Wilson (February '82 VR)

BEST BALLET PROGRAM



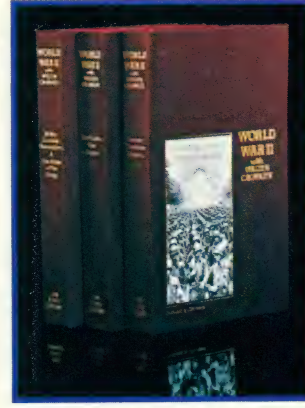
LA SYLPHIDE (*EVI*) "Not only is the video version a definite improvement on the stage version of this famous ballet, but it is also one of the most delicate and tasteful ballet videocassettes yet to be produced. . . . The videocamera work is exceptional. The attempt is to capture the special feeling of 19th-century lithographs, and to my eye it works superbly." —Clive Barnes (March '82 VR)

BEST SPORTS PROGRAM



PELE: THE MASTER AND HIS METHOD (*Viacom/20th Century-Fox Video*) "It points impressively to what the video future may hold for sports buffs. Through judicious editing, the tape becomes a wonderfully evocative piece of memorabilia for die-hard Pele partisans while serving as a seminar for tyros and viewers not yet familiar with the many nuances of soccer." —Pete Coutros (June '81 VR)

BEST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM



CBS VIDEO LIBRARY OF WORLD WAR II, WITH WALTER CRONKITE (*CBS Video Library*) "These are the great moments of history captured in their own time. . . . The editing is superb." —Eric Berger (November '81 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

THE ROYAL WEDDING (*EVI*) (Reviewed by Robert Angus, November '81 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

BIG GAME AMERICA: PRO FOOTBALL'S FIRST 50 YEARS (*NFL Films Video*) (Reviewed by Pete Coutros, July '81 VR)

Continued

BEST HOW-TO PROGRAM



AEROBICISE (Paramount Home Video) "A new twist on some old turns that makes for nearly two hours of mesmerizing viewing as well as a useful lesson on how to keep in shape."—Meg Whitcomb (March '82 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

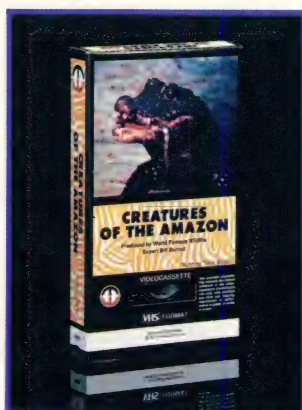
CARING FOR YOUR NEWBORN (VidAmerica) (Reviewed by Pat Irons, April '81 VR)

BEST MADE-FOR-TV PROGRAM



A CONNECTICUT YANKEE (MasterVision) "There's plenty of Mark Twain wit for the adults and a cracking-good costume drama for the kids. The quality of the production ranks right up there . . . and the videotape duplication [is] of a high order. In short, it's a winner on just about any basis you care to judge it."—Robert Angus (March '82 VR)

BEST SPECIAL SERIES



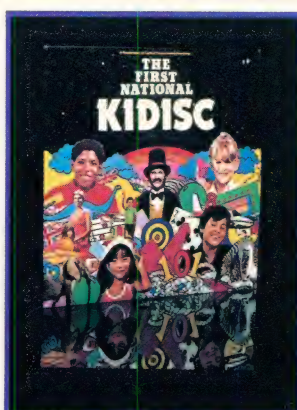
WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT SERIES, BY BILL BURRUD (20th Century-Fox Video) "An excellent series by the world-famous naturalist Bill Burrud . . . that's aimed at the average viewer and shows us why the subjects being studied are so vital to all of us."—Eric Berger (August '81 VR) Series entries reviewed include: *The Great American Wilderness* (April '81 VR); *Creatures of the Amazon* (May '81 VR); *Vanishing Africa* (August '81 VR).

BEST VINTAGE TV PROGRAM



DEAN MARTIN AND JERRY LEWIS TELEVISION PARTY (Budget Video/Hollywood Home Theatre) "It captures Dean and Jerry at their peak. They are very different from the Hollywood-movie Martin and Lewis, working here on an unscripted telethon from which these highlights are taken."—Leonard Maltin (August '81 VR)

BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



THE FIRST NATIONAL KIDISC (OPA) "... Here we have something really different—nothing like this has ever before been available. An exciting achievement in the use of video technology for children."—Genevieve Kazdin (November '81 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

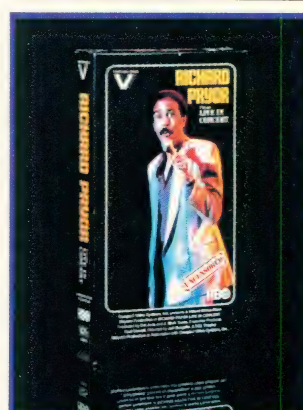
DUNDER KLUMPEN (Video Gems) (Reviewed by Genevieve Kazdin, July '81 VR)

BEST COMPILATION PROGRAM



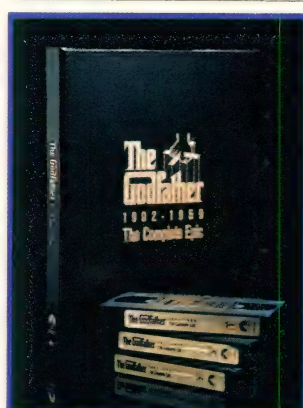
LAUREL & HARDY COMEDY CLASSICS, VOL. VII (Nostalgia Merchant) "When any collection of 'classics' reaches Vol. 7, one begins to suspect the cream has been skimmed. Not so in this case. These shorts aren't just funny—they're rich with the very essence of laughter. And if it sounds crabby to say, 'They don't make 'em like this anymore,' so be it."—Leonard Maltin (January '82 VR)

BEST COMEDY PROGRAM



RICHARD PRYOR LIVE IN CONCERT (Vestron Video) "In the 1960s nearly everyone owned comedy [record] albums. Today we are beginning to get the video equivalent. I'll bet a tape like this will be played and enjoyed as often as any of those audio recordings were years ago. . . . Pryor maintains a formidable level of hilarity for most of his hour-and-a-quarter. By any standards, this is a knockout performance."—Leonard Maltin (March '82 VR)

BEST MOVIE: NEW OR RECENT RELEASE



THE GODFATHER: THE COMPLETE EPIC (Paramount Home Video) "Coppola has re-edited the footage so that the bloody saga of the Corleone family runs chronologically. It [is] a made-for-cassette masterpiece that has finally reached its ultimate and most personally expressive form. If videocassettes did not exist, they would have to be invented for *The Godfather Epic*."—Andrew Sarris (April '82 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

RAGING BULL (20th Century-Fox Video) (Reviewed by Andrew Sarris, November '81 VR)

BEST MOVIE: CLASSIC

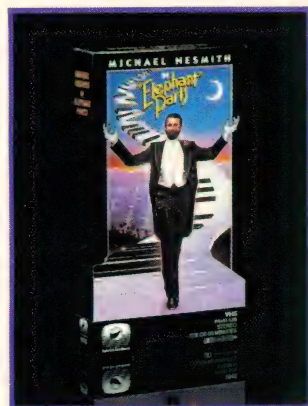


42ND STREET (20th Century-Fox Video) "This new video-cassette version should do much to brighten the future of classic musicals in video formats. The tape is marvelously sharp, pristine clear and clean . . . in contrast to the faded, scratchy prints you usually see in TV showings of movies this old."—Roy Hemming (September '81 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

ANIMAL CRACKERS (MCA Videodisc) (Reviewed by Clive Barnes, May '81 VR)

BEST DIRECTOR



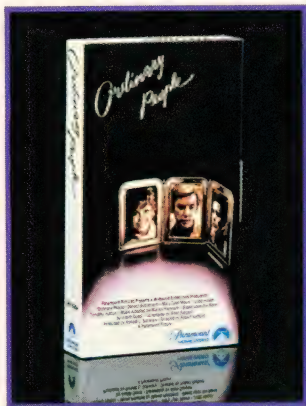
BILL DEAR for **ELEPHANT PARTS** (Pacific Arts Video) "No other piece of original video programming I've yet seen more effectively shows the potential of the video medium."—Ed Levine (September '81 VR)

BEST X-RATED PROGRAM (TIE)



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BEST ACTRESS



MARY TYLER MOORE in **ORDINARY PEOPLE** (Paramount Home Video) "A brave and unsentimental performance."—Marjorie Rosen (October '81 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

NASTASSIA KINSKI in **TESS** (Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment) (Reviewed by Marjorie Rosen, December '81 VR)

BEST X-RATED PROGRAM (TIE)



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BEST ACTOR

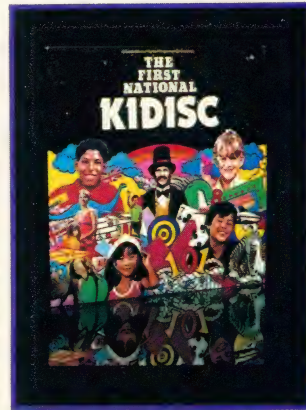


ROBERT DUVAL in **THE GREAT SANTINI** (Warner Home Video) "He is superb as a character at war against himself."—James Link (February '82 VR)

HONORABLE MENTION

PETER O'TOOLE in **MASADA** (MCA Videocassette) (Reviewed by Roy Hemming, August '81 VR)

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BEST MUSIC PROGRAM: CLASSICAL

No Award.

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Clive Barnes	Genevieve Kazdin
Eric Berger	Ed Levine
Martin Bookspan	James Link
Pete Coutros	Leonard Maltin
Robert Denmark	Rex Reed
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Brando, Buster Burns and ballet



Family reunion for Pacino, Brando, Caan, Cazale in newly re-edited for video *The Godfather: The Complete Epic*.

Drama

THE GODFATHER: THE COMPLETE EPIC (1981) ★ ★ ★ ★

With Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, Diane Keaton, James Caan. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. (Paramount Home Video, 3 cassettes, color, 368 min., \$179.95)

By Andrew Sarris

Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather Epic* is, in its videocassette version at least, aptly named. The three cassettes which make up the package run, respectively, 129:36 minutes (Part I), 125:04 minutes (Part II) and 133:12 minutes (Part III)—for a grand total of 387:52 minutes. That's almost 13 minutes longer than the combined theatrical running times of *The Godfather* (175 minutes) and *The Godfather, Part Two* (200 minutes), the two Oscar-winning gangster classics of 1971 and 1974 respectively. Moreover, Coppola has re-edited the footage so that the bloody saga of the Corleone family runs chronologically. This is essentially the presentation that Coppola

sold to WNBC-TV a couple of years ago, but the cassette version is without the network censorship of several scenes and, of course, without commercial interruptions. Hence the *Godfather Epic* can properly be considered as a made-for-cassette masterpiece that has finally reached its ultimate and most personally expressive form.

I must confess at this point that I write as one who entertained very strong reservations about *The Godfather* pictures when the two movies came out, reflected in my *VR* review of the videocassette release of the first movie. I was particularly disturbed by the apparent glorification and sentimentalization of the real-life Carlo Gambino mob. I tended also to restrain my enthusiasm for Marlon Brando's highly praised stuffed-mouth interpretation of Don Vito Corleone, "Godfather" of a criminal empire masquerading as a family. Most of the other acting seemed even at the time to be extraordinarily rich in feeling and color. Robert DeNiro as the young Vito Corleone, Al Pacino as the youngest son Michael, James Caan as the oldest son Sonny and John Cazale as the middle brother Fredo, of course, comprise the Method-Ethnic equivalent of a Royal Family as perpetually beset by murders and betrayals as that of Shakespeare's (and Olivier's) *Richard III*.

These actors, along with Brando, form the solid nucleus of the Corleone family and of the *Godfather* mystique, and they are brilliantly abetted by a remarkable ensemble of actors in the roles of henchmen and enemies. Keep your eye out, too, for Al Let-

tieri as Solozzo and Richard Castellano as Clemenza, as well as Robert Duvall as Tom Hagen, Stirling Hayden as Captain McCluskey, Michael V. Gazzo as Pentangeli, Lee Strasberg as Hyman Roth, Richard Conte as Barzini and Alex Rocco as Moe Green—among others. Indeed, the level of ensemble playing throughout *The Godfather* is one of the glories of '70s movies.

What is particularly impressive about *The Godfather Epic* on cassettes, however, is the way in which the re-edited footage flows into a unified and highly individualized vision of the world. Despite Mario Puzo's enormous contributions as novelist, scenarist and expert to the project, the vision is mainly that of Francis Ford Coppola. This is despite the fact that the first *Godfather* movie was made in an entirely different creative climate from that which later enveloped *The Godfather, Part Two*.

Coppola had been hired originally by producer Albert S. Ruddy and Paramount simply as a dutiful young director who would probably not make too many waves. Coppola had to fight and scheme to get much of the casting he wanted, and before the end of production he was on the verge of being fired for supposed extravagance and insubordination. Fortunately, Brando stood by him and he weathered the storm—though there were times when he was hanging onto the picture by his fingernails. Still, many exhibitors at the first screening of *The Godfather* complained that Coppola had "ruined" a good book. They were put off no doubt by the arty

RATINGS

- ★★★★ Outstanding
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Average
- ★ Below Average

All tapes are SP or Beta II unless otherwise noted.



THIS MONTH'S VIDEO HITS

Last Month This Month Top Tapes

—	1	MOMMIE DEAREST (1981) With Faye Dunaway, Diana Scarwid. Directed by Frank Perry. (Paramount, 129 min., \$84.95)
—	2	PATERNITY (1981) With Burt Reynolds, Beverly D'Angelo. Directed by David Steinberg. (Paramount, 94 min., \$84.95)
2	3	CLASH OF THE TITANS (1981) With Harry Hamlin, Judy Bowker. Directed by Desmond Davis. (MGM/CBS, 127 min., \$69.95)
3	4	APOCALYPSE NOW (1979) With Martin Sheen. Directed by Francis Coppola. (Paramount, 153 min., \$99.95 stereo VHS; \$94.95 mono)
1	5	AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (1981) With David Naughton, Jenny Agutter. Directed by John Landis. (MCA, 97 min., \$89.95)
6	6	STIR CRAZY (1980) With Richard Pryor, Gene Wilder. Directed by Sidney Poitier. (Columbia, 111 min., \$79.95)
—	7	FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER (1981) With Walter Matthau, Jill Clayburgh. Directed by Ronald Neame. (Paramount, 99 min., \$84.95)
9	8	SUPERMAN II (1981) With Christopher Reeve, Margot Kidder. Directed by Richard Lester. (Warner, 127 min., for rental only)
—	9	THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974) With Marilyn Burns, Gunnar Hansen. Directed by Tobe Hooper. (Wizart, 85 min., \$64.95)
5	10	THE FOUR SEASONS (1981) With Alan Alda, Carol Burnett. Directed by Alan Alda. (MCA, 108 min., \$89.95)

*Based on a nationwide survey of sales and rentals at presstime. Unless otherwise noted, prices are for both VHS and Beta. denotes ITA Golden Videocassette Award for a million dollars in verified sales.

fluorescent lighting of cinematographer Gordon Willis, by the "mumbling" of the Method actors, by Coppola's funereal pacing and by his oblique treatment of the violence.

When *The Godfather* went on, nonetheless, to score at the box office and to bring fame and fortune to Coppola, he was suddenly in such a strong career position that he was given *carte blanche* on the sequel. When Richard Castellano demanded more money for a reprise of his role as a fat, cheerful gang leader, Coppola blithely wrote him out of the sequel—an easy enough task in a property with such a high mortality rate. My own, possibly incomplete, body count is six in the DeNiro, Sicilian, early New York era, seven in the Brando middle period and at least 18 dur-

ing the Pacino reign. These deaths do not include that of a Hollywood racehorse early on, and, much later, the abortion undergone by Michael's disenchanted wife, Diane Keaton.

Yet, in its present cassette form, *The Godfather Epic* lacks a stigma of sordidness or catchpenny sensationalism. By adding several key scenes with John Cazale's Fredo, I think Coppola has come close to transfiguring the Corleone family into an emotional expression of some of Coppola's own hopes and memories about his own family. Even in his youth Coppola reportedly yearned to become the ultimate patriarch—and, with the help of Mario Puzo's wild imagination, he has succeeded in creating an enduring fable about his own powerful feelings about "family" to the exclusion of

all other loyalties and obligations.

So much of *The Godfather Epic* emerges in its cassette form as a series of interlocking painterly images. The bathtub suicide of Michael V. Gazzo's Pentangeli is obviously modeled after the death of Marat—and, indeed, many quotations from the art galleries were noted at the time of the theatrical releases.

The cassette-watching experience, however, is inevitably more thoughtful and more reflective than the moviegoing experience. That is why I must confess, with a certain degree of humility, that I have finally been converted by Coppola and by his ritualized treatment of his brutal material. As I watched *The Godfather Epic* unfold, I could not help being struck by the number of ceremonial occasions in which the characters find themselves—weddings, funerals, christenings, church pageants. After a time, even the most gruesome murders take on the aura of sacred rites.

You may choose not to agree with Coppola's very pessimistic view of human destiny, but I think you will find it almost impossible not to admire the magnitude of his artistic achievement. If videocassettes did not exist, they would have to be invented for *The Godfather Epic*. □

Foreign

TILL MARRIAGE DO US PART (1979) ★ ★ ★

With Laura Antonelli, Jean Rochefort. Directed by Luigi Comencini. (Vestron cassette, color, 97 min., no suggested list price)

By Andrew Sarris

Discriminating collectors of soft-core sex goddesses have long been delighted by the paradoxical charms of Laura Antonelli, she of the angelic countenance and the devilish corpus. Our luscious Laura is not only the star of Luigi Comencini's *Till Marriage Do Us Part*, she is clearly its only *raison d'être*.

This Italian sex farce—set in the currently fashionable epoch before, during and after World War I—seems designed to titillate us with the endless tease of the heroine's elaborate underwear. Nonetheless, the movie is not without its satiric ambitions, as it pokes fun at the political and sexual mores of the Italian upper classes.

In this respect, the English dubbing of the original Italian dialogue leaves much to be desired. Normally, I would bemoan this process, and proceed to celebrate the superiority of English subtitles in rendering the authentic flavor of a movie. In this instance, however, I cannot honestly say that the original Italian-language version that I saw on a New York theatrical screen filled me with any more mirth. For one thing, the satire is much too broad and crude for my taste. For another, Laura Antonelli in the fully revealed flesh is much too awesome an artifact of nature to arouse laughter. Her

bosom, particularly, is truly majestic in its surprising massiveness as she writhes with a delectable mixture of passion and frustration. Yet she is appealing enough in the non-erotic passages to keep the very jumpy narrative in motion.

The narrative itself begins with the wild notion of the heroine's discovery on her wedding night that she has inadvertently married her own brother. She thus remains chaste for several years, in the course of which a skillful French seducer (Jean Rochefort) is scared off by her very virginity. He, poor wretch, had been anticipating a comfortable affair with a married woman. She is eventually "awakened" by her ostentatiously virile chauffeur. Of course, she would like to pretend that she is being ravished, but the no-nonsense chauffeur insists that she acknowledge that she wants sex even more than he does.

There is also a brief, elliptical lesbian episode and a wicked spoof of D'Annunzio, the bombastic D. H. Lawrence of Italy.

This videocassette version is more than adequate to record the delicious charms of Antonelli, but it is not as much of a turn-on as another of her movies, *Malizia*. Till Marriage



Laura Antonelli: "awakened."

Do Us Part does, however, provide sumptuous backgrounds against which the carnal glitter of Antonelli can shine. I commend her to sensualists the world over. Hers is truly an international language. □

Musical

NEW FACES (1954) ★ ★ ★

With Eartha Kitt, Paul Lynde, Robert Clary, Alice Ghostley, Ronny Graham, Virginia de Luce. (EVI cassette, color, 98 min., \$59.95)

By Robert Angus

When producer Leonard Sillman staged his first *New Faces* Broadway revue in 1934, the revue format was fading fast in favor of the book musicals of Gershwin, Kern, Porter, Rodgers and Hart and others. Nonetheless, Sillman continued to stage similar shows well into the 1950s, intro-

ducing along the way such talents as Tyrone Power, Imogene Coca, Van Johnson, Gypsy Rose Lee and Eve Arden.

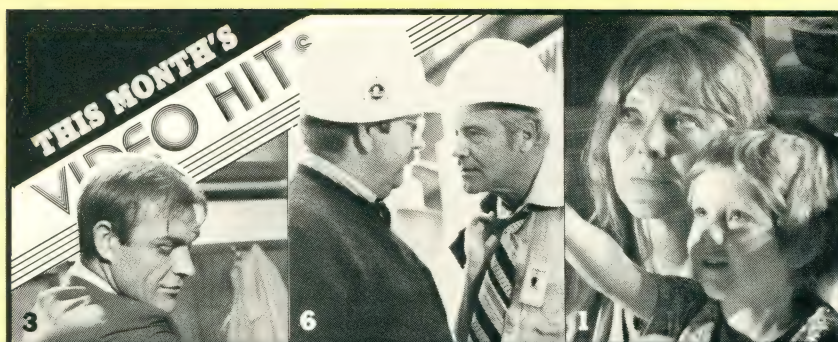
Perhaps none was as successful nor is as well-remembered as the 1952 revue. In addition to featuring the performing talents of the late Paul Lynde, Eartha Kitt and others, it drew on the musical abilities of Sheldon Harnick and the writing skills of Mel Brooks, Ronny Graham and Peter De Vries.

It's that show—virtually complete—that EVI gives us. This filmed version, which opened theatrically in New York in '54 while the critics' memories of the stage show were still fresh, was panned at the time as being little more than an unimaginative filming of stage skits without any special "cinematic" treatment.

That criticism was valid then—but,

ironically, it is one of the strengths of this videocassette. There is a half-hearted attempt at introducing a storyline (something about a show producer fending off the creditors long enough for his production to open so that a potential backer can see his protégé properly launched on a theatrical career). But that doesn't intrude on such classic revue numbers as Alice Ghostley's "Boston Beguine," Eartha Kitt's "Monotonous" or Robert Clary singing "I'm in Love with Miss Logan."

The numbers speak for themselves rather than with the aid of brilliant direction or camerawork—and, when the material is as strong as this and the performers as engaging, that's no bad thing. Indeed, in addition to the brief intrusions of plot, my only other quibble with this videotape edition is that it



Last
Month

This
Month

Top Discs*

—	1	CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND: THE SPECIAL EDITION (1980) Directed by Steven Spielberg. (RCA, CED, 133 min., \$34.98; Columbia, LV, 132 min., \$34.95 stereo)
—	2	STIR CRAZY (1980) With Richard Pryor. Directed by Sidney Poitier. (RCA, CED, 110 min., \$27.98; Columbia, LV, 111 min., \$29.95)
—	3	FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (1964) With Sean Connery, Daniela Bianchi. Directed by Terence Young. (RCA, CED, 118 min., \$27.98)
—	4	HELLO, DOLLY! (1969) Directed by Gene Kelly. (RCA, CED, 145 min., \$34.98; 20th Century-Fox, LV, 148 min., \$34.95 stereo)
1	5	STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE (1979) With William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy. Directed by Robert Wise. (Paramount, LV, 132 min., \$35.95 stereo)
2	6	THE CHINA SYNDROME (1979) With Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon. Directed by James Bridges. (Columbia, LV, 122 min., \$34.95)
4	7	KRAMER VS. KRAMER (1979) With Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep. Directed by Robert Benton. (RCA, CED, 105 min., \$27.98)
—	8	DEATH WISH (1974) With Charles Bronson, Hope Lange. Directed by Michael Winner. (RCA, CED, 93 min., \$24.98)
—	9	THE SHOWDOWN: SUGAR RAY LEONARD VS. THOMAS HEARNS (1981) Directed by Frank Belmont. (RCA, CED, 62 min., \$19.98)
—	10	LET IT BE (1970) With The Beatles. Directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg. (RCA, CED, 81 min., \$19.98)

*Based on a nationwide survey of sales and rentals at presstime. CED and LV refer to the incompatible disc formats. denotes ITC. Golden Videodisc Award for a million dollars in verified sales.

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wasn't long enough to include such great numbers from the '52 stage version as "Guess Who I Saw Today?", "Nanty Puts Up Her Hair" and the Charles Addams encore sequence of "Love Is a Simple Thing."

In short, if you saw and liked the show, you'll love this video record of it. If you're not that old and would like to see for yourself what all the footaraw was about, you'll find here an accurate record of what took place on a Broadway stage 30 years ago that sent most of the theatrical critics into ecstasies. □

Classics

OUR TOWN (1977) ★ ★ ★ ★
With Hal Holbrook, Sada Thompson, Ned Beatty. Directed by George Schaefer. (MasterVision cassette, color, 111 min., \$64.95 Beta, \$69.95 VHS)

By Andrew Sarris

Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, which opened at the Henry Miller Theatre in New York on February 4, 1938, was played without props or scenery, in the manner of the Japanese *No* plays. An actor billed as Stage Manager introduced the audience to the inhabitants of Grovers Corners, New Hampshire on a morning in May 1901. The focus was primarily on two neighboring families—the Gibbs and the Webbs—and of growing-up love that blossoms over the next 12 years between George Gibbs and Emily Webb. The three acts, entitled Life, Love, and Death, take place in 1901, 1904 and 1913, respectively.

Coming as it did near the end of the Great Depression and on the eve of the Second World War, the play was criticized by many prominent intellectuals for what was deemed an inappropriate

a comparatively happy ending was tacked on to the text so that Emily Webb, who dies in childbirth in the original stage version, only *dreams* that she has died in the movie version.

The newly released videocassette version, part of the MasterVision Arts Series, is actually a transcription of an NBC Color Special, first televised on May 30, 1977. Minus the commercial interruptions of the original network production, the videocassette runs a thoroughly engrossing 111 minutes. With Hal Holbrook as the Stage Manager, Ned Beatty as Dr. Gibbs, Sada Thompson as Mrs. Gibbs, Robby Benson as George Gibbs, Ronny Cox as Mr. Webb, Barbara Bel Geddes as Mrs. Webb, and Glynnis O'Connor as Emily Webb, the cast of this *Our Town* compares favorably with that of any previous production in any medium. Moreover, the original ending of the play is restored.

The background is a compromise between the traditionally bare stage of theatre productions and the naturalistic sets of the 1940 movie—in that there are still no props but semi-abstract architectural forms to give the *idea* of houses and streets, though not the literal imagery. Consequently, the *literary* quality of the play comes through more strongly, and the philosophical overview of the Stage Manager tends to overwhelm the domestic dramas.

Hal Holbrook is a more histrionic and more eloquent Stage Manager than was the more whimsical and low-key Frank Craven in the original play and movie. The other performers have taken their cue from Holbrook and pitch their characterizations to a deeply felt level of metaphysical awareness. Beatty, Thompson, Cox and Bel Geddes, in particular, are marvelously sensitive and direct, though one senses that they have one



Our Town's O'Connor, Holbrook, Benson: Wilder's own preferred version.

quiescence and fatalism. Nonetheless, *Our Town* has become an enduring classic of the American stage. In the movie version that was released in 1940,

ear cocked to eternity. By contrast, Glynnis O'Connor and Robby Benson seem disconcertingly contemporary in this context as the young lovers. Benson,

particularly, seems too knowing in the soda-fountain scene that a young William Holden played with such poignant and "square" vulnerability in the movie version 40 years ago. Glynnis O'Connor is blessed with more genuinely girlish charm and good looks than the overly mannered Martha Scott of the original, and she seems to have the gift of crying on cue without becoming tiresome and turgid, but she is too realistic an actress to rise to the dramatic heights of the graveyard scene.

All in all, however, this cassette is undeniably a cultural treasure. More than ever before, Thornton Wilder's own voice breaks through the stage machinery to remind us of the glories of ordinary life and ordinary people. It's no wonder Wilder reportedly said he favored this production over the better-known 1940 movie version. □



Keaton: no ordinary squirt.

BUSTER KEATON: THE GREAT STONE FACE (1974) ★ ★ ★ ★

With Buster Keaton. Original material directed by Buster Keaton, others. Compilation written and edited by Vernon Becker and Mel May. Narrated by Henry Morgan. (MasterVision cassette, B&W, 61 min., \$59.95 Beta, \$64.95 VHS)

By William K. Everson

First of all, a word of caution—in reverse. The very visible name of Raymond Rohauer on both the tape and on the packaging might well give some movie collectors pause. He is known among classic-movie connoisseurs as a distributor who recently committed what some of us consider one of the cultural crimes of the century: re-editing a whole group of theatrically distributed Keaton classics—reshaping gags and inserting new subtitles, presumably just to create a "new" entity and thus ensure copyright protection. Although *The Great Stone Face* eventually fell into Rohauer's hands and now parades his name, its production was entirely independent of his involvement or print supply.

Essentially, *The Great Stone Face* is a compilation of some five carefully edited Keaton subjects. But it's also biographical and quite effective as such, even though all of the film-history background has to be told over stills, without any new visual documentary material. On the whole, the narration for this material does a good job. It's forced to generalize and telescope, and although one might quibble with a few statements, it is serious and sincere in its admiration of Keaton. The narration over the shorts, on the other hand, is occasionally redundant—and too often gags are underlined by descriptions or comments which are unnecessary. But given that humorist Henry Morgan is the narrator, it is both surprising and commendable that the temptation to add verbal gags to the visual riches on view was resisted.

The Keaton pictures here, though not all representing the best of Keaton (they were culled from public domain material), cover his career from his first short with Fatty Arbuckle (*Fatty at Coney Island*) through *Cops*, *Balloonatic* and *Daydreams* to one of his feature classics, *The General*.

The quality of the film prints used is excellent. Material was obviously cleaned and cleared of blemishes, and its tape reproduction is first-rate. Occasionally Keaton's fondness for using the *entire* film frame for a gag results in some detail being cropped at the bottom or top of the screen, but that is a problem with much surviving 35 mm material, too.

It's a pity that the end title from *Cops* was not used, since it was very much a part of the picture and its background design—Keaton's porkpie hat perched on a tombstone—was a pessimistic visual motif that recurred in several of his pictures. Occasionally, the narration downplays the importance and quality of the shorts, referring to individual gags as forerunners of the great classics that are to come—as though the shorts were merely dry runs for the features instead of comprising an outstanding body of comedic work in themselves.

But these are the objections of a purist, and the only real complaint I have is my perennial one of a too busy soundtrack: A plethora of effects for falls, collisions and splashings by water and a rather over-familiar music track from the Thomas Valentino library of stock music become a bit wearing. Used in moderation, such effects are ideal for atmospheric *punctuation* and are completely in keeping with the mood of silent-movie music, but not when used for an entire score.

I must also admit to some mild frustration occasioned by the fact that *The Great Stone Face's* original (approximately 85-minute) running-time is here pruned down to 60 for the tape release—by the simple expedient of lopping off the carefully condensed *The General* after about 10 minutes, fading out after a single gag and not even at a key juncture in the movie's story. Admittedly, *The General* is familiar (and available) to Keaton



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LA FAVORITA (black & white)-Sophia Loren
with the voices of Palmira Vitali Marini,
Gino Sinimberghi, Paolo Silveri and
Alfredo Colella

THE YOUNG CARUSO (black & white)
with the voice of Mario Del Monaco

MY SONG GOES ROUND THE WORLD
(black & white)
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Victor de Kowa

PAGLIACCI (black & white)
Gina Lollabrigida, Tito Gobbi
with the voices of Francesco Merli,
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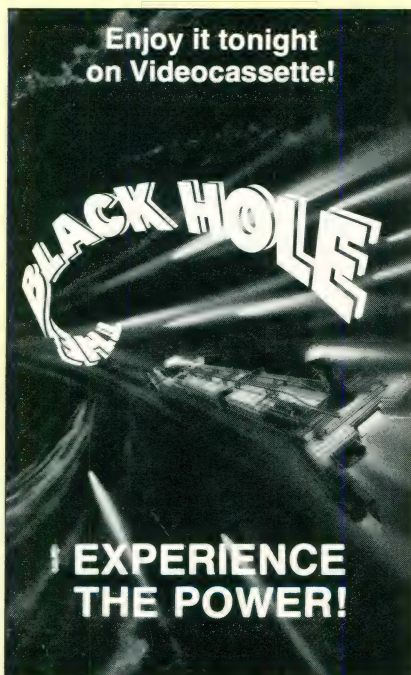
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collectors who probably won't mind this abrupt cut. On the other hand, the original condensation was intelligently and deftly done—and viewers seeing the tape for the first time may surely wonder why they've been handed such an unexpected cliff-hanger.

Despite the excellence of the print quality, far superior to that on many of the Keaton tapes around (especially one I reviewed in *VR*, June '80), collectors may already have in complete form the various pictures included here, and so its main appeal may be to newcomers as well as to libraries, schools and other educational institutions. MasterVision, certainly a new company to watch, seems to be specializing in documentaries on the arts and sciences, and thus far, of its approximately 50 releases, only two (this one and a similar Chaplin release) deal with aspects of movie history. In such an overall context, my minor earlier criticisms can certainly be overlooked by educational purchasers, and the tape is very much to be recommended.

Incidentally, the tape's jacket "information" brings up a point I have long wanted to make in a review. We are told on the cassette's cover that the tape offers "seldom-seen footage" from the five Keaton pictures involved. Actually, *all* of the material has been seen in recent theatrical compilations (all of them subsequently sold to TV), *all* of it is available to 16 mm and 8 mm film collectors and *all* of it is available separately on other tapes. Let me stress that I do not want to imply any fraudulent intent on the part of MasterVision—clearly a company of integrity, and probably merely repeating the promotional material supplied by the owner of the original material. But it does draw attention to the waste so many cassette distributors make of their covers. Admittedly, there isn't space to provide for the kind of detailed, valuable and often quite literary notes that accompany most phonograph records—but there *is* space to provide more than misleading blurbery or hype. For example, a few paragraphs giving correct years, basic credits, some brief descriptive material and perhaps a few review quotes would be appropriate. Some tapes don't do more than give the titles, the stars and original production dates—and some that I've seen can't get even those facts right. (The situation seems to be worse in England where many cheaper, more obscure movies, particularly horror pictures, are retitled and the tapes sold with no information whatsoever.) At least a few mimeographed notes should be included inside a tape package. Certainly this would be invaluable for both home viewers and educational users. And, while I'm at it, I wish video distributors would recognize that not every old-time movie is a "classic." I shudder when I see some admittedly fascinating and entertaining old relics being peddled as though they belonged on the shelf with *Intolerance*, *Stagecoach*, *Citizen Kane* and the work of Buster Keaton. □

Vintage TV

THE GEORGE BURNS AND GRACIE ALLEN SHOW (1951) ★ ★ ★

With George Burns, Gracie Allen, Bea Benadaret, Fred Clark, Harry Von Zell. (Video Images cassette, B&W, 30 min., \$31.95 VHS, \$29.95 Beta)

By Leonard Maltin

George Burns once offered a cogent opinion as to why *The Burns and Allen Show* was such a long-running success on radio and television. "The format of our show is pretty simple," he explained. "One character or another's got a problem. He gives it to Gracie and she runs away with it. It doesn't matter whether she ends up in the attic or across the street in a neighbor's kitchen. Gracie's got it and we let her carry it along and see what happens. I've got one



Burns and Allen: welcome friends.

rule, though. We never tell a big joke at the finish. If we've got a big point that rounds out the story, we go get it, but we don't end on it. We don't have to. The audience accepts us not as comedians but as neighbors. They know all about us. We can fade out casually because we'll be back next week."

Burns' remarks rang in my head as I watched this videocassette taken from a rare kinescope of a live broadcast of December 23, 1951. It's a pleasant, thoroughly enjoyable program—hardly different from the more familiar filmed or taped half-hours still in TV syndication. But if you're looking for belly-laughs, look elsewhere.

This is not a particularly distinguished Burns and Allen outing, but the charm of its stars and the easygoing style of the show make it impossible to dislike it. George makes his remarks to the audience, like a Greek chorus with cigar. Gracie greets all comers with her usual addle-brained innocence—creating confusion and misunderstandings. The story, such as it is,

revolves around the approaching Christmas holiday. An obnoxious family friend and her three hyperactive daughters are coming to stay. Neighbors Blanche and Harry Morton are trying to hide their respective presents by giving them to Gracie for safekeeping. And George is planning to dress up as Santa Claus to give the kids a treat.

One of the funniest aspects of the show is the way announcer Harry Von Zell and the sponsor (Carnation Evaporated Milk—"from contented cows") are woven into the script. The commercial pitch is made in the midst of a comic subplot involving Harry and a pretty secretary from the Carnation company—with Gracie providing a funny topper. (This practice was common in the '50s, but it's disappeared from television since that time. Today's TV generation has no idea how much fun some commercials used to be.)

That's it. As previously indicated, there is no boffo punch-line to the show. When it's over, you feel as if you've spent a pleasant half-hour with some amusing friends. And you *do* look forward to seeing them again.

The quality on the original kinescope from which the tape is taken is surprisingly clean, with good contrasts—not always common with material this old. □

Interactive

HOW TO WATCH PRO FOOTBALL (1982) ★ ★ ★ ★
(Optical Programming Associates disc, color, interactive, 60 min. straight time, \$55)

By Pete Coutros

Never have so many watched so much and grasped so little as football fans watching the ol' oblate spheroid being thrown, kicked or carried by men encased in more armor than was worn at Agincourt.

There are probably no sports partisans with less accurate knowledge about the ingredients of their particular game than the fans venting their spleen on the coach from their own vantage points in the farthest reaches of a stadium—or their living-room counterparts who must be restrained from hurling the remnants of six-packs at the TV screen over some imagined miscue by the team on which they'd wagered more than they can afford.

Both categories of "Pigskin Fanaticus" (a breed unique to North America) need to acquaint themselves with *How to Watch Pro Football*, an outstanding hour-long videodisc seminar geared to enhance a viewer's appreciation of what he or she is looking at, whether it's "live" action on the field or on the tube at home.

To teach this "get smart" course on the game that transfixes millions every fall and winter right up to the Super Bowl, the producers of this interactive videodisc—the first

of its kind for sports addicts—have assembled the greatest tutorial talents of the gridiron.

"The game plan is formulated from films of teams to be played," explains Cleveland Browns coach Sam Rutigliano at the top of side one. As his off-camera voice apprises us of the genesis of the game plan, Rutigliano is seen standing before a large screen in a room beneath the stands in Cleveland Stadium. While the projector reels off shots of the Browns' upcoming foes, he zeroes in on what he perceives to be their weaknesses. Players sit in rapt attention, much like students looked into a respected professor discoursing on some arcane data.

A narrator's voice breaks in to alert us about the fast-forward, reverse, freeze-frame and other videodisc capacities we can use with a simple flick of the finger. Then, suddenly, we are on the field, in a huddle, listening to the quarterback calling the next play. Call it eavesdropping, call it being privy to the quarterback's best-laid plans, call it vicariousness. But you are there—up to your ears in pigskin.

"Double up left 28 solid..." the command begins. It goes on to incorporate more numbers. Colors, too. Is it any wonder so many players sleep with the play book under their pillows?

But precision and orderliness do not always carry the day, no matter how good the game plan or how arduous the preparations. Late in a losing cause, for instance, we hear a coach sending in a play. He is employing the necessary nomenclature but then, almost in desperation, he blurts, "Let's throw it deep down the middle and hope we get an interference call." Beautiful!

John McKay, bespectacled, white-maned and professorial, explains such nuances of the game as "pro sets" and "I-formations" in a manner calculated to inform even the least sophisticated viewer. Don Shula, who'd probably get a hernia of the wrist if he were to wear all his Super Bowl rings, provides a dissertation on defense, his forte.

On side two of the disc, Shula gets into goal-line defense and what it takes to thwart an adversary intent on shoving the ball down your throat—or across your goal line. Then, switching to Audio Track No. 2, we tune in to Kansas City Chiefs coach Marv Levy waxing expertly about goal-line offense. In both instances, much is made of "penetration." If the offensive line gets off the mark smartly and penetrates the defensive alignment, the ball carrier will invariably score. Conversely, if the defensive line gets penetration, the runner is likely to be stymied. Got it?

Also on this football faculty: Tom Landry, the Cowboys' boss, discussing the passing game; Dick Vermeil, on running the ball; and Chuck Noll, on more intricacies of defense.

Along with seven of the finest minds in the game putting their genius on the line, there can also be counted among the joys of this presentation some excellent camerawork

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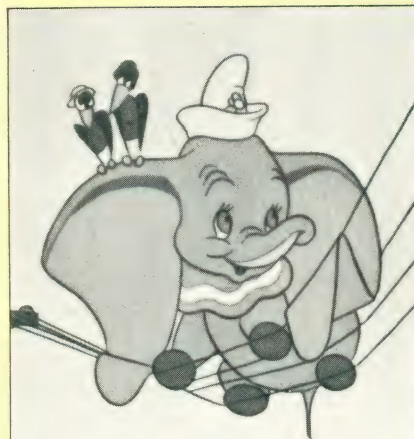
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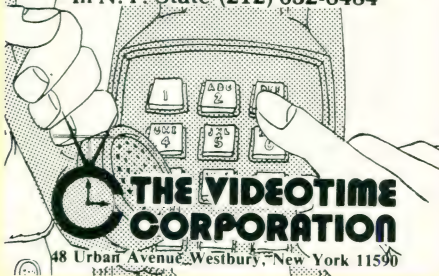


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which clearly delineates the various points being made.

While all these features make this disc an asset for any football fan, it is its "interactive" aspect that makes *How to Watch Pro Football* such an exciting innovation. In the "Freeze-When" chapter near the end, a viewer's capacity for learning is put to the test when challenged to indicate, via buttons on a small console, which strategy is employable in various situations (offensive formations, defensive alignments, which type rush and why, zone or man-to-man pass defense). It's the next best thing to actually playing the game yourself—and you don't have to worry about pulling any hamstrings!

Mark this one up as a winner. Even if you have to give a whole bunch of points. □

Sports

BASEBALL'S HALL OF FAME: THE GAME AND ITS GLORY

(1982) ★ ★ ★ ★

Narrated by Donald Sutherland.

(VidAmerica cassette, color, 60 min., \$49.95)

By Pete Coutros

For those stout adherents of the theory that "things ain't what they used to be," this tape is a must. It will conjure up a heavy mist in the eyes of old-timers.

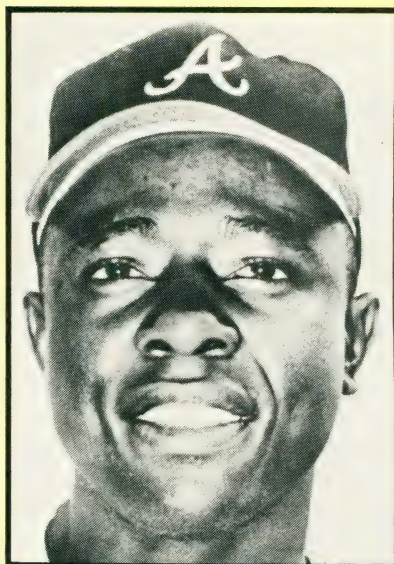
But there's also something here for late-coming "new-timers" who, till now, have had to settle for a parent's or grandparent's version of how things "used to be."

Utilizing as the hub the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, this hour-long program radiates out into the past, the present and ultimately, the future. There are 172 plaques in the hall, commemorating great achievements and their achievers ("a pretty ritzy group"). But there is room on the walls for at least 172 more, indicating great faith that our national pastime will not wane in popularity for a while yet.

One of the more delightful aspects of this tape is its narrator, Donald Sutherland, the actor with imposing credits and with an obvious affinity for the sport (he was at one time a Brooklynite, ergo a Dodger fan).

Perhaps because of its leisurely pace, which allows more time for quiet contemplation than, say, football or hockey, baseball may have engendered more fine writing than any other sport. Mark Durand, who scripted this work, follows in that tradition. Paraphrasing James Fenimore Cooper, for instance, Durand informs us that, in the course of laying out the first diamond at Cooperstown, Abner Doubleday found "a comfort in a clearing, more than they could find in a forest." He reminds us, too, that "legend, hard fact, statistics and myth is what baseball is all about." Not a bad amalgam, as the game's durability attests.

But the real grabber here is the clips of heroes of halcyon days, performing heroic



Hank Aaron: Brave hitter.

feats: The Babe hitting homers, Roger Maris hitting more (in one season) and Hank Aaron hitting still more (over a lifetime career), Willie Mays tumbling to the turf to rob Vic Wertz in the 1954 Series.

You want more, you got it! How about Harvey Haddix pitching 12 perfect innings against the Braves in 1959, but losing his no-hitter and the game (but not his composure) on a homer by Joe Adcock in the 13th? No one else ever pitched so superlatively for so long—and, for that, Haddix is immortalized at this bucolic village in upstate New York. "He didn't win the game, but he won a place in baseball history," Sutherland informs us, and the way he says it wins our hearts.

There is also Jackie Robinson stealing home against the Yankees, Duke Snider stealing hits against the Yankees and Bobby Thomson stealing the National League pennant from Ralph Branca and the rest of the Dodgers. Remember?

The profusion of other sports in recent years has dampened the Hot Stove League, an amorphous, far-flung body of fans who keep the game alive and throbbing through its long winter hiatus. Now, thanks to this wonderful piece of video memorabilia, the Hot Stove League has kindling for at least a score more winters. □

Rock

THE TUBES VIDEO (1982) ★ ★ ★

With The Tubes. Directed by Russell Mulcahy. (Thorn EMI cassette, color, 53 min., \$59.95)

By Ed Levine

If there's ever been a rock group tailor-made for video, it's the Tubes. Few other bands, not even the Rolling Stones, can compete with the visual flair and sass that the Tubes bring to their live show. Replete with three dancers, numerous costume changes and many clever props, a Tubes concert is

one of the quintessential theatrical rock experiences. So it's not surprising that the band's first commercially available full-length videocassette is a razzle-dazzle affair, filled with bizarre images and moments of madness. Unfortunately, too often on this tape the band's visual flair is undermined by lapses in judgment.

The Tubes Video finds the band doing visual interpretations of songs from a recent audio album, *The Completion Backward Principle*, plus a couple of Tubes hits such as "White Punks on Dope," and some heretofore unreleased material.

The Tubes have always seemed to be preoccupied with adolescent sexual fantasies, and that preoccupation unfortunately pervades many of the tape's best segments. "Sports Fan" finds Tubes lead singer Fee Waybill portraying the ultimate sports "junkie." We see him dressing in a locker room surrounded by a bevy of cheerleaders (the Tubes' dancers). Once dressed, he, the cheerleaders and the rest of the band go into the ultimate sports-fan fantasy production number. As the song ends, Waybill abruptly becomes a Vegas-type lounge singer, introduces the dancers and, with the aid of a nifty special effect, cheerfully bounces them into outer space.

It's a great bit, but do we really need to see Waybill feigning sex with one of the cheerleaders? Or see him being fondled by a cheerleader making orgasmic noises? It's not sexy and it's not funny. It's merely silly and smacks of condescension on the part of the Tubes towards the puerile-minded in their audience.

Perhaps the worst example of tastelessness occurs with "Mondo Bondage." Here the wild lead singer is dressed as an S&M deviant in a metal-spiked leather jockstrap. He strolls into a kitchen, where he is set upon by the

fact that on some of the other selections the band shows it really doesn't need to resort to such outrageously stupid antics to come up with visual images to propel the music. "Sushi Girl," for example, finds Waybill dressed as a scuba diver in an aquarium, happening upon all kinds of sea life, including a bevy of Japanese beauties (sushi girls). They all swim around, encountering all kinds of entertaining creatures before the sushi girls start grooving to the music and the whole thing degenerates into a huge mud fight. Here the sexual overtones are not overdone, so the viewer is entertained without being bombarded with too much bumping and grinding.

"Business" is a bit of satire that really works. The band strolls between two rows of secretaries busily typing away. As the song progresses, the band forms a Temptations-like dance, singing the song's funky chorus dressed in white buttondown shirts and ties. Devo fans might find this bit slightly derivative, but it's great fun all the same.

"White Punks on Dope," the group's biggest hit, is given a clever treatment that alternates between colorful concert footage and black-and-white staged video footage.

"Weebee Dance" is a jungle-stomping finale in which the screen is awash in a blaze of colors and spectacular visual images.

Director Russell Mulcahy has given much of the tape a fuzzy, eerie sheen. On many songs Waybill and company are bathed in pools of blue or red light. Consequently, the color separations seem imprecise, but I imagine that was the effect Mulcahy and the band were shooting for. The sound is crisp (though not stereo), and, even though Mulcahy used only two cameras throughout the tape, the edits are virtually imperceptible. The tape is also virtually glitch-free.

For years the Tubes have been a band in



The Tubes: visual flair undermined by adolescent lapses in judgment.

dancers. Playing the dominatrix role to the hilt, the dancers stick his head in a broiler, stick his hand in a toaster, brand him with an iron, smear raw egg on his buttocks and then cook the egg by placing him on a stove burner!

What makes such sequences so sad is the

search of a medium. The best selections on *The Tubes Video* indicate that in video they might have finally found what they're looking for. I just hope that next time they will curb the puerile tendencies and sustain the creativity and true zaniness throughout an entire tape. □ (Continued)

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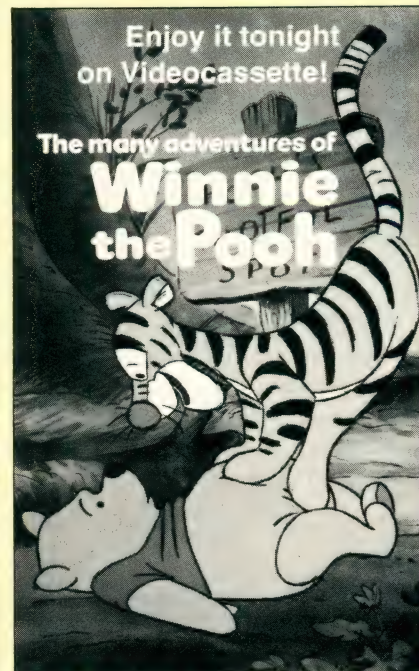
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Classical

ERICK FRIEDMAN (1982) ★ ★

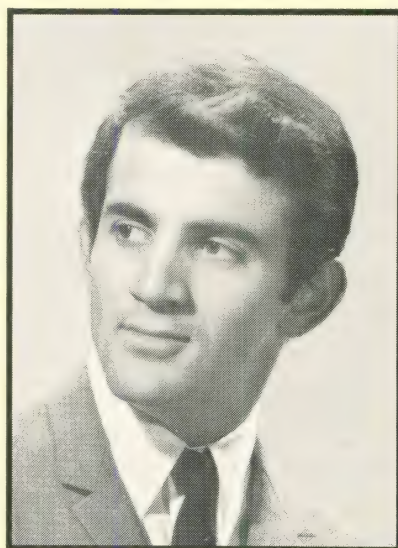
With Erick Friedman, Pavel

Ostrosky. Interview by Dr. Herbert

Axelrod. (Kultur/Dubs cassette, color, 60 min., \$69.95)

By Martin Bookspan

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first originally produced video concert to be released by Kultur. Its previous releases have been mostly taken from films originally



Friedman: a real bow bouncer.

made in the 1940s or '50s. It's good to have new classical music video releases (there have been so few either old or new), but I'm afraid Kultur has much to learn.

What is presented here is a recital of music by the revered Austrian composer and violinist Fritz Kreisler—both original works and arrangements. The performances by American violinist Erick Friedman and his pianist, Pavel Ostrosky, are uniformly first-rate, with Friedman revealing an especially impressive *spiccato* (bouncing bow) technique. Friedman is also impressive in his spoken voice-overs, making intelligent observations about Kreisler and violin-playing generally.

What is not so impressive is the overall video production. First of all, there is little attempt at imaginative use of the camera. In the Kultur release of a Jascha Heifetz film from the '40s (*VR*, July '81) there were wonderful closeups of the violinist's bow arm and hand, and of his left-hand fingering technique. Nothing of the kind is shown for Friedman. This seems a curious video regression. On the concert stage Friedman is a most commanding figure. Certainly more could have been made of this quality for video purposes.

The transitions from one program element to another are also awkward. The program consists of Friedman's performance, an interview, plus scenes of teaching and

rumination. But we are bumped from one aspect to another with some very awkward bridging.

We may owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Herbert Axelrod, the moving spirit behind the Kultur video enterprise, for what he's trying to achieve in classical releases, but he has no expertise as an interviewer. At one point, indeed, he creates the impression that Kreisler was labelled a "fraud" by an influential critic when the reality is that Kreisler merely confessed to *New York Times* critic Olin Downes that he himself had composed all those 18th century-style works he had played and once attributed to such obscure figures of the period as Pugnani, Padre Martini, Francoeur and others.

It is a pleasure to note Kultur branching out into newly produced video material. And Friedman's performance itself on this tape is admirable. One can only hope that the future will bring more professional polish to Kultur's productions. □

Ballet

BALLERINA: KAREN KAIN

(1980) ★ ★

With Karen Kain, Frank Augustyn,

Denys Ganio, Rudy Bryans.

Directed by Philip McPhedran.

(MasterVision cassette, color, 100 min., \$54.95 Beta, \$69.95 VHS)

By Clive Barnes

It's been said that a dancer's career is written in water—water occasionally muddied by the ink of contemporary critical descriptions. That, at least, used to be their fate—really the fate of almost all performing artists. There might be a half-convincing description here, a lithograph or a photograph there, but the performers themselves still remained elusive and fugitive images.

For singers, instrumentalists and perhaps to a lesser extent actors, sound recording changed that. They still could not be seen but at least they could now be heard. However, who wanted to *hear* dancers? The patter of tiny feet gives scant idea of the talent in the feet in question or the body topping them.

With the advent of movies, some idea of individual dancers could be left to posterity. Perhaps the first to so benefit was the great Anna Pavlova, who was filmed by Douglas Fairbanks on the set of *The Thief of Baghdad*. Years later his short film was adroitly given a piano accompaniment, and it now remains as a precious memento.

One would have imagined that, since then, moviemakers all over the world would have raced to document impressions of the great dancers of our time. They didn't, at least not at first. But from bits and pieces, nowadays most dancers do leave a legacy.

With this new tape, Karen Kain, prima



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ballerina of Canada's National Ballet, has become the subject of a feature-length documentary. It would seem reasonable that some attempt should have been made to give a picture of how she dances, her personal style and, surely, a selection of her dancing in some of her most prominent roles. Indeed, I looked forward to a picture of Kain as a young ballerina—a permanent progress report, etched in tape, of an ongoing career. Unfortunately this has not been done. Instead we are given an unduly large number of classroom shots, each one looking much the same as any other. We see Kain rehearsing, and rehearsing, and rehearsing Roland Petit's *Carmen* (indeed, Bizet's music drones on through almost the entire tape). We see excerpts of Kain in the bedroom scene from John Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, plus brief excerpts from the *Corseaire*, in which she is partnered by Frank Augustyn.

A great deal more time is spent in purely documentary footage. We get an interview with Kain by the English ballet critic Clement Crisp, statements from Roland Petit, from her personal manager David Haber, from the director of Canada's National Ballet School Betty Oliphant, and from the ballet-master of the National Ballet of Canada David Scott. All this would probably be acceptable—even in its present shallow form, where cliché is piled upon cliché—in a TV documentary you expect to watch only once. But, seriously, how many interviews are worth playing through even twice or being in one's tape library?

This tape offers journalism where dance history would have been more to the point. As a result, I would suggest that it is more a tape to rent than to buy. □

Children's

MR. TOO LITTLE (1977) ★ ★ ★
With Rossano Brazzi, Carmine Caridi, Cheryl Miller, Ray Ballard.
Directed by Stuart McGovern.
 (Video Gems cassette, color, 90 min., \$54.95)

By Genevieve Kazdin

Against the background of a small-town circus, this movie tells of the adventures of two unlikely friends: a Siberian tiger and a wonderful little dog.

The story is simple enough, as the two "heroes" rebel against the manipulations of Zabo, a mean animal trainer (handsomely played by Rossano Brazzi), and run away from the circus. But everything ends happily. The animals are safe and the innocent, loving kindness of a pretty young girl, Mindy, transforms Zabo from greedy and cruel to understanding, generous and friendly.

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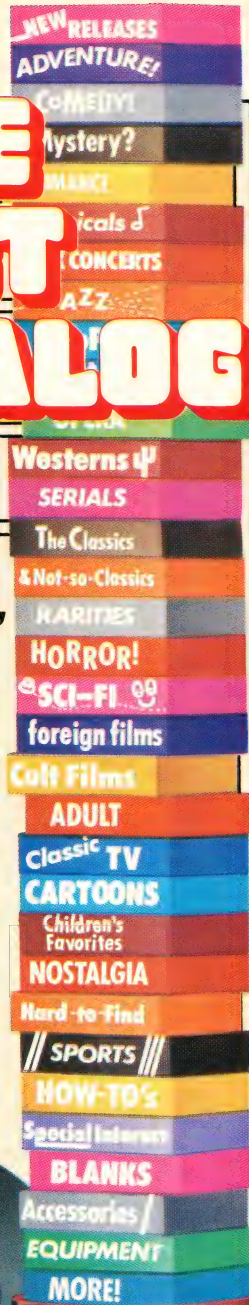
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llamas, bears and so on are just casually present. Jugglers and costumed clowns stroll around the yard. And, fortunately, we get to see a number of actual ring performances as part of the unfolding storyline. You really get the feeling of watching daily life in a small circus.

The animals are irresistible. I found myself immediately attached to Mr. Too Little, the dog, and Mr. Too Much, the tiger. And when Mr. Too Little first runs away, on Christmas Eve in a soaking thunderstorm with lightning flashing, well, "heart-rending" is an understatement. So it's no surprise that the tension builds to quite a pitch during their escape and chase scenes. Experienced adults may be perfectly aware that a traditional happy ending is in store, but young children probably will find the tension a bit scary. After all, clouds of poison gas rolling through a storm drain wherein hide our beloved, four-legged heroes can be truly frightening. So be prepared to reassure those children who may have trouble dealing with this.

I must report that I viewed an advance "work print" of this release, so I'm unable to comment accurately on final technical aspects of the tape transfer.

But I must mention another point that may bother some parents. The police officers are portrayed as inefficient, clumsy, bumbling buffoons. They are, admittedly, very funny. In the midst of all the tension, such humor is welcome. But if you prefer that your children think of authority figures with respect, this movie won't do that.

Except for the animals, most of the performances are not all that good. This is not likely to bother the children at all. They will be caught up in the color and excitement of the circus and the animals, with little awareness of faults older viewers will find obvious.

Most adults will find this production simplistic, but I'm sure youngsters from age 4 to 9 or 10 will mostly enjoy watching it and becoming involved with the characters and their setting. □

Documentary

GREAT FIGURES IN HISTORY:

JOHN F. KENNEDY (1981) ★ ★ ★
Narrated by John Hart, Charles Colingwood, Harry Reasoner. Produced by Edward Hoppe and Pat Shevlin from CBS News programs originally produced by Leslie Midgley, Hal Haley, Bernard Birnbaum, others. (MGM/CBS Home Video cassette, B&W and color, 104 min., \$49.95)

By Roy Hemming

This release in the generally impressive CBS News Collectors Series starts out

superbly—with a 41-minute documentary titled *The Presidential Years* that provides a well-balanced yet candid overview of John F. Kennedy's presidency.

For those of us who lived through those years, the cassette provides a fascinating review not only of events (some well-remembered—some widely forgotten, unfortunately) but also of the unique Kennedy style and the special Kennedy charisma. For youngsters born since 1963, this video portrait is the sort that no history textbook can equal for its sense of involvement.

Kennedy's presidential tenure may have been a brief one, but it saw more significant events affecting US and world history than the full terms (plus) of some other Presidents. Kennedy "won" some (the



Youthful JFK: no darts in the fog.

Cuban missile crisis, the '61 Berlin crisis, the nuclear test-ban treaty) and "lost" some (the Bay of Pigs invasion, the misjudging of events in Vietnam). These are all covered with a real "you are there" feeling—especially in the give-and-take of JFK's press conferences.

At the same time, the documentary wisely avoids being judgmental. Since so few of JFK's domestic programs ever got through Congress, the focus is kept on foreign-policy matters—but only as far as they went under Kennedy. Unlike some other "analyses" over the years, this one has the honesty to say (through narrator John Hart, referring to Vietnam but applicable to much more) that "guessing what JFK would have done is like throwing darts into a fog."

Hart makes another marvelous point near the end: "Someday, someone may separate Kennedy's wit from his wisdom, his style from his use of power. What his generation remembers is the mixture—and what it promised." That's exactly what the first 41 minutes of this cassette convey so impressively.

But from there on, the cassette is much less impressive. The longest segment (48 minutes) is titled *Four Dark Days* and is a condensation of CBS News coverage of

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the Kennedy assassination and funeral. The murder itself is not sensationalized. (In fact, it's shown only in still photos.) But the tremendously moving drama of that long weekend doesn't come through, either. There is endless (and eventually boring) footage of the ceremonial carrying of the flag-draped coffin in and out of Air Force One, the White House, the Capitol Rotunda, the church and so on. Jacqueline Kennedy's role in planning the funeral and what one English reporter at the time called her "majesty in grief" seem deliberately underplayed by both the narration and choice of news clips. And few of the historic array of foreign dignitaries who attended the funeral are pointed out in the narration or even identified.

Finally, a 15-minute "postscript" titled *JFK: The Childhood Years* has only about four or five minutes of interesting material. It's a rambling interview of the late President's mother, Rose Kennedy, conducted by Harry Reasoner several years after the assassination. Mostly, she reminisces very generally about what kind of a kid JFK was growing up. It may once have seemed a semi-revealing TV tidbit, but it has little lasting substance in a videocassette meant for home-library preservation. How much more meaningful it would be "excerpted" along with other interview comments about JFK by friends and foes alike—as compiled and edited by the same team that made the opening segment. □

Comedy

LAUREL AND HARDY DOUBLE FEATURE: MOVIE STRUCK (1937) and THE FLYING DEUCES (1939) ★ ★

With Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy.

Directed by (1) Edward Sedgwick, (2) Edward Sutherland. (Ampro cassette, B&W, 69 min. and 71 min. respectively. EP and Beta III, \$49.95)

By Ed Hulse

To begin with, this offering is *not*, strictly speaking, a Laurel and Hardy double feature. *Movie Struck* (originally titled *Pick a Star*) features Stan and Ollie only in a couple of sequences, for which they get special billing, but their total footage adds up to less than 20% of the picture—which hardly makes it a starring vehicle for them.

Aside from that, *Movie Struck* is an interesting little show. It's a remake of Buster Keaton's *Free and Easy* (1930, also directed by Sedgwick). This Hal Roach-produced version stars Jack Haley in Buster's old role, as an ineffectual but well-meaning promoter whose main goal in life is the procurement of a movie contract for his sweetheart, small-town beauty queen Rosina Lawrence. Rosina journeys with her sister (played by Patsy Kelly) to Hollywood, where she eventually gets a chance to make good, but only



Laurel and Hardy: shortchanged?

after she's become involved with a wolfish matinee idol, winningly portrayed by a basically miscast Mischa Auer.

The Laurel and Hardy footage—later snipped from the feature and released as a short entitled *A Day at the Studio*—includes some "on the set" hijinks involving scenes of reciprocal comic destruction with brutish heavy Walter Long. Later on, there's an interlude that finds The Boys, resting between takes, engaging in an impromptu musical competition which results in Ollie swallowing a harmonica. Neither bit is particularly vital to the storyline, but they are amusing asides in an otherwise modest programmer.

The real treat of *Movie Struck* is the considerable footage given the charming and lovely Lawrence, a Roach contract player who had appeared in Charley Chase and *Our Gang* shorts, as well as in Laurel and Hardy's *Way Out West* (1936). A pert, pretty blonde with a good singing voice, Lawrence never made it to stardom, although *Movie Struck* shows her off to good advantage, and her two featured songs ("Pick a Star" and "Without Your Love") are delightful. The vivacious Lyda Roberti also has a number, but her considerable comic talent is overlooked, and she disappears immediately following the song.

Overall, *Movie Struck* is entertaining without being spectacular. "Old-movie" buffs will surely enjoy it, but the average viewer with little knowledge of or affection for the players isn't likely to be impressed.

The quality of the tape reproduction is acceptable, this transfer having been made from a 16 mm dupe print—although Ampro's penchant for copying three hours of movies onto a one-hour VHS tape (necessitating playback at the EP speed, which not all VHS machines have) robs the viewer of better quality due to the extra slow duplication speed. You get a bargain-priced tape, but at the expense of video quality.

This problem is even more pronounced

in viewing *The Flying Deuces*, copied from a poor 16 mm print, with high contrast and a muddy soundtrack. But *Deuces* is, at least, a bona fide Laurel and Hardy vehicle, albeit one I've never been able to warm up to. Independent producer Boris Morros (later to be the real-life subject of the 1960 spy picture, *Man on a String*) surrounded Stan and Ollie with former Roach cronies—director Sutherland, photographer Art Lloyd, supporting players Jimmy Finlayson, Charlie Middleton, Richard Cramer and Sam Lukin. But the results aren't up to Roach standards.

The Boys, staying in Paris, decide to join the Foreign Legion after Ollie discovers that his heart-throb (Jean Parker) belongs to another—who just happens to be the Legion commandant (Reginald Gardiner). There are several clever bits, some good gag lines and an enjoyable rendition of "Shine On Harvest Moon" by Ollie. But the comic construction is generally weak, often devoting too much footage to routines that build to weak and predictable payoffs. I recall as a child being disturbed by the finale—in which Ollie dies and is reincarnated as a derbied horse. That he should die at all bothered me, but that he should return to earth as a horse puzzled me.

As usual, the strongest point in favor of buying this Ampro "double feature" is the price, quite reasonable for two full-length movies. But the question is again quantity vs. quality, and many L&H collectors may not want to settle for barely acceptable transfers of marginally intriguing subjects, especially when so much better Laurel and Hardy material is available from other sources. □

Horror

THE SEVEN BROTHERS MEET DRACULA (1978) ★ ★

With Peter Cushing, David Chaing, Julie Coe. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. (EVI cassette, color, 88 min., \$59.95)

LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF (1975) ★ ★

With Peter Cushing, Ron Moody, Hugh Griffith. Directed by Freddie Francis. (EVI cassette, color, 90 min., \$59.95)

By Mark Trost

You can't blame a videocassette company for trying. In an attempt to bring something "different" to the video audience, EVI is offering a group of rarely seen British horror titles that, as far as we can determine, aren't available to American cable or broadcast television. (Either that, or no network wanted the pictures.) But you really have to be a fan of low-budget action/horror flicks to justify the asking price.

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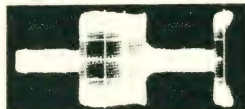
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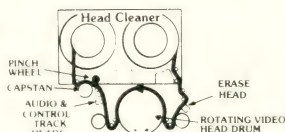
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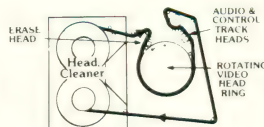
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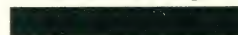


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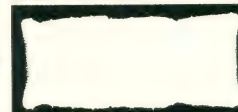
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under review is *The Seven Brothers Meet Dracula*—or, as *Variety* would probably say, "Chop Socky Meets Blood Sucky." EVI bills the cassette as the "perfect blend of martial arts and horror"—and it is, basically because it's the *only* blend so far of martial arts and horror.

For those who want to end the suspense early, you'll be surprised to learn the picture isn't all that bad. Top kung fu action-movie producers the Shaw Brothers teamed up with long-dormant British horror-picture factory Hammer Films to make the movie, and all the ingredients one expects from each company are here—in abundance.

Horror fans will enjoy (perhaps with a grin) Hammer favorite Peter Cushing recreating his role as Dr. Van Helsing—and he's actually in most of the picture. Unfortunately, the top-billed vampire, Dracula (John Forbes Robertson), isn't. The Prince of Darkness appears briefly in the beginning and at the end of the picture, which instantly reduces the picture's appeal to horror aficionados.

Kung fu fans won't find any superstars championing *their* side, but the action is well choreographed and almost too plentiful. For those more concerned with plot, you're watching the wrong cassette. For no apparent reason, an army of Oriental undead terrorizes a small Chinese town. Between pogroms, the vampire leader travels to Transylvania to meet the king of them all—Dracula. In short order, Drac takes over the warlord's body to wreak bloody havoc on the Orientals.

The scene quickly turns to Chungking University where Van Helsing (Cushing) is lecturing. As fate would have it, one of the Seven Brothers, a refugee family from the vampire-run town, is in the audience and convinces Van Helsing, his son (Robin Stewart) and a rich English socialite (Julia Coe) to join their fight.

From there on it's one blood-drenched kung fu battle after another (with a few vampire bites thrown in), as the Seven Brothers (and one Sister, by the way) battle black-belt blood-suckers. If it weren't for Cushing's wonderfully classy English accent and constant looks of astonishment when the Brothers start twirling their axes and jumping 60 feet into the air, the whole brew would be hard to swallow.

Even genre die-hards should be warned about production quality. The first few minutes are very splicy and confusing, with the plot so incoherent it takes Van Helsing to explain it some 15 minutes into the picture. More distressing, however, is the way the original CinemaScope print was scanned for its tape transfer. The main subjects of a scene are often cut off or are only partially on-screen.

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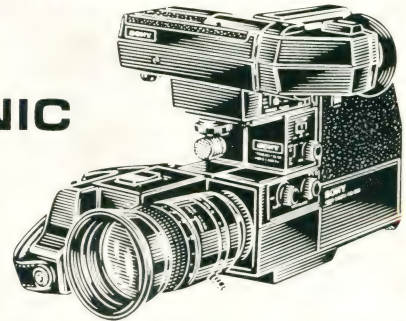
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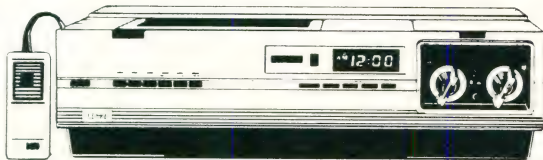
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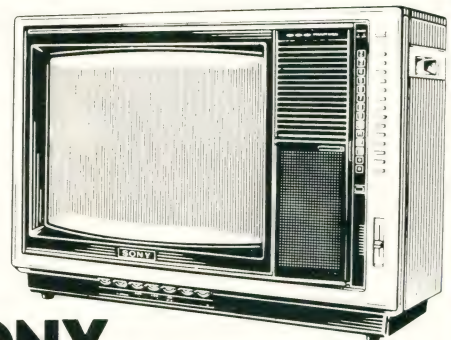
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Legend of the Werewolf, as is a better cast and script. Although the picture takes a lot of liberties with the werewolf legend, it's still enjoyable. And the presence of such marvelous character actors as Ron Moody, Hugh Griffith and (again) Peter Cushing adds to the appeal.

The story starts out more as a comedy than a scare entry. A traveling circus circa 19th-century France, led by a W.C. Fields-type showman (Griffith), stumbles upon Etoile, a child raised by the wolves. The wild youth soon becomes the road show's main attraction. But when the wolf boy turns into a man (David Rintoul), guess what happens whenever there's a full moon? Etoile is soon terrorizing a small town and only the coroner (Cushing) seems to realize what kind of horror is on the loose.

As shock pictures go, this one could be scarier and the blood could run a little deeper. But for a small, independently made British entry, this one isn't bad—thanks to the good cast, most notably Moody as a Faginesque zookeeper.

Both cassettes are enjoyable for what they are—rather cheap action/horror movies. So, if you have a craving for blood with a little rice thrown in, you could do worse. □

X-Rated

TABOO (1980) ★ ★ ★

With Kay Parker, Mike Ranger, Juliet Andersen, Dorothy LeMay. Directed by Kirby Stevens. (VCX cassette, color, 85 min., \$89.50)

By Al Goldstein

Taboo is apparently on its way to being the best selling X-rated videocassette of the year. But, for me anyway, popularity doesn't mean everything.

Taboo is an X-rater that plumbs the depths of the unconscious sexual psyche of its predominantly male audience with great precision. Big-breasted women, sex for the asking, beauty for the taking and satisfaction on demand—these are the ingredients, flowering in the minds of so many American men, that *Taboo* focuses on. They may be adolescent fantasies, but they are the kind of fantasies that some of us live for and die by. In *Taboo*, mixed in with this steamy broth of energetic sexual pyrotechnics is the ultimate taboo: incest. The result is a movie that could keep a Freudian analyst busy interpreting for the next 50 years. In spite of the picture's commercial success, I found it a sophomoric and trite exercise of limited imagination.

Taboo is a tale in which young Paul (Mike Ranger) has a thing for his mother—especially the two big attractions perched prominently on the rib cage of Mommie Dearest. He has a thing for his

girlfriend too—and who wouldn't, for Dorothy LeMay is the hottest porn arrival since Annette Haven. But Paul usually thinks of his mom while having sex with his girl. The mother (Kay Parker), meanwhile, is bewitched, bothered and bewildered when her husband jumps out of bed one night, packs a bag and leaves her alone in suburbia with son Paul.

The "peeping Tom" shots of Paul watching his mother shower and dress are most erotic, and luscious Kay Parker is well-endowed, well-preserved and sexy—though a bit too old to arouse any carnal instincts in me. However, I find Dorothy LeMay more than enough to make up for this. She is delightful, delicious and most inviting.

One night, Mama returns home after an orgy (in which she refused to participate) only to find her son sleeping in a most provocative position. She paces the floor for a while like a caged cat and then finally leaps into bed with him. What follows is one of the hottest and, perhaps, one of the most tender love scenes ever to appear in a porn flick.

But guilt consumes Mama. So she stops by the house of a girlfriend (a platonic girlfriend, as far as we can tell) to confess her incestuous encounter with her son as the girl masturbates to her description of the night of familial passion.

Ultimately, the movie's message is that if it feels good, do it. And though the between-sex plot moves slowly and is often hard to swallow, the sex is relatively hot throughout and the handling of the subject matter is far more sensitive and credible than I ever expected possible.

The technical quality of the tape I watched is excellent.

Taboo is certainly a breakthrough movie in a way. But because of its fundamental faults—a silly, pea-brained plot and inadequate acting on the whole—I find it less meaty overall than some other X-rated features of recent memory—its popularity notwithstanding. □

HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES

(1981) ★ ★ ★ ★

With Annette Haven, Jamie Gillis, John Leslie, Chris Hopkins. Directed by Anthony Spinelli. (VCX cassette, color, 86 min., \$99.50)

By Robert Denmark

Hobgoblins aren't real, and people can't stroll away after sticks of dynamite explode in their mouths. Yet few of us ever let such realities get in the way of our enjoying great horror movies or slapstick comedies. The appreciation gauges for those two types of pastimes—like those for all other kinds of "vertical" media—are basic, enigmatic and practically unarguable. We simply laugh if something strikes us as funny. We shriek at something frightening. And—let's be frank about it while the subject is porn—we get horny when a movie is erotic enough, even

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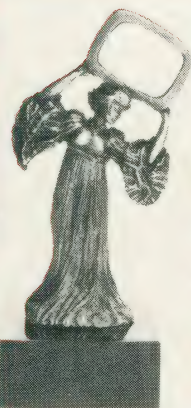
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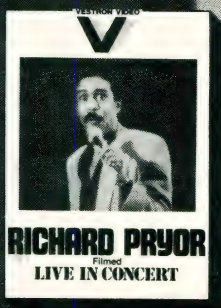
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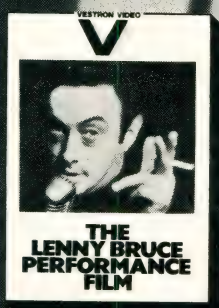
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if it, like *High School Memories*, is full of other flaws.

Still, *High School Memories* is by far the most effective and involving pure aphrodisiac I've ever seen on videotape.

Remember, I'm talking about an unabashedly self-limiting "art" form here, like disco lyrics or found-object sculpture. But when it comes to doing what it's supposed to do, *High School Memories* is masterful—one of the all-time best. With strong production values (and a stupid story line, which I'll get to shortly), the tape includes several of the most romantic and compelling bits of erotica ever recorded for the video medium.

In fact, I'm convinced that it's the video medium, and the attention that director Anthony Spinelli seems to have paid to video, that make *High School Memories* so successful. The most arousing scenes in the tape (which begin midway into the picture, with the Jacuzzi scene) all have a warm intimacy, a patient pacing and a gentleness to them that I'm sure would seem strangely disturbing in the average peep-show cubicle or porn palace. But at home, alone with a lover—the way the average video viewer tends to watch an X-rated tape—the best parts of *High School Memories* are as relaxing and enveloping as a thick satin comforter or the sound of a nearby seashore.

Still, the picture does have certain problems, some of them significant ones. Worst is the high-school football-team "hook." (Calling it a "plot" would be like calling Annette Haven "frogface.") Maybe the idea is supposed to be to offset the relative taste and restraint of the movie's best scenes with something that would appeal to the K-Mart crowd of back-slappin', foot-stompin' video porn fans. If so, I think it's a lousy idea, and a condescending misjudgment of the millions of VCR owners who know that life isn't over on high-school graduation day.

The only other major fault of *High School Memories* is the acting. Porn stars are easy targets, so I won't go into a lengthy discourse describing Jamie Gillis as Arnold Stang on Spanish fly or John Leslie as Magilla Gorilla after EST. Even Annette Haven is disappointing in some of the scenes in which the English language is the main thing coming out of her mouth. Suffice it to say that most of the dramatic performances in the movie, like the performers themselves, are serviceable.

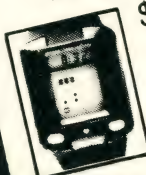
The exception—and one of the great surprises of this tape—is newcomer Chris Hopkins. Unlike so many other female porn performers, she doesn't come on like a flesh-hungry tigress, a surrendering pussycat or a worn-out, bored, old slut. Like the several individual scenes that make *High School Memories* something extraordinary, she approaches sex with a nicely mixed sense of frolic, warmth and humanism. ☐ (Cont.)

Robert Denmark's byline has appeared in *Playboy* and *Video X*, among other publications.

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In Brief

ROCKET SHIP (1936) and MARS ATTACKS THE WORLD (1938) ★ ★
 With **Buster Crabbe, Jean Rogers, Charles Middleton, Frank Shannon.**
 Directed by **Fredrick Stephani and Ford Beebe.** (Ampro cassette, B&W, 140 min., EP and Beta III, \$49.95)

By Ed Hulse

These two feature-length versions of two '30s *Flash Gordon* serials were originally edited in 1938 to capitalize on Orson Welles' headline-making "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast.

Actually, I've long felt that *Rocket Ship* holds up better than the serial it's taken from (*Flash Gordon*, '36). In condensing the 13 episodes to a normal-length feature, the editors tightened some overlong scenes and eliminated embarrassingly staged events which marred the chapterplay. Moreover, it maintains continuity quite well, conveying the essence of the serial without muddying the principal storyline (which often happens in making feature versions).

Mars Attacks the World, taken from *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* ('38), doesn't fare quite as well in the condensation pro-



Shannon, Crabbe: unbottled.

cess, but then the second serial wasn't as good as the first to begin with.

As usual with Ampro's double features, we have two-and-a-half hours of material transferred to a length of tape that would last an hour at the SP (standard play) speed. The tape plays at the six-hour speed—which means you must have the EP mode on your VCR for playback. While picture quality is acceptable, it's not as good as you'll get on standard-play tapes, and I found several dips in volume on my review copy which necessitated my getting up and down to adjust the control. I must add, though, that for many video fans the price tag will more than compensate for the variable picture quality. □

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

(1981) ★ ★ ★

With **John Belushi and Blair Brown.**
 Directed by **Michael Apted.** (MCA Videocassette, color, 103 min., \$89)

By Mark Trost

If you've never heard of this one, we're not surprised. Due to poor box-office reception at its theatrical release, Universal (MCA) quickly pulled this engaging Tracy-Hepburn-style comedy. But now you can see it on cassette—and it's well worth a look.

Lawrence Kasdan, scripter of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, wrote the screenplay, and those who've seen *Raiders* will notice a joke in that hit feature that also appears here.

Michael Apted (*Coal Miner's Daughter*) directed this touching romance between a muckraking Chicago newspaperman (Belushi) and a beautiful wilderness expert (Brown). Apted happily opted to keep Belushi's *Animal House* antics to a minimum, emphasizing characterization over cartoon.

Tape picture quality is absolutely first-class. □

THE FRONT (1976) ★ ★ ★

With **Woody Allen, Zero Mostel.**
 Directed by **Martin Ritt.** (Columbia Home Entertainment cassette, color, 94 min., \$79.95)

Woody Allen didn't write or direct this serio-comic look at Hollywood blacklisting during the Joe McCarthy era of the '50s, but he does provide most of the laughs.

Allen plays a waiter whom blacklisted TV writers are using as a front for their works. Sequences depicting Allen trying to pass himself off as a big-time TV writer and attempting to get a script from a writer without being caught rank with his best comic moments.

The serious side is represented by Zero Mostel in a memorable performance as a veteran comic whose career is destroyed by false accusations. Mostel, of course, was a real-life victim of the blacklist of the '50s, as were director Ritt, screenwriter Walter Bernstein and some of *The Front's* supporting players. They know whereof they're "spoofing."

Print quality is up to major studio standards, and an opening still montage of '50s photographs accompanied by Frank Sinatra's rendition of the song "Young At Heart" is almost worth having the tape for on its own. (M.T.) □

ONLY WHEN I LAUGH (1981) ★ ★

With **Marsha Mason, Kristy McNichol, James Coco.** Directed by **Glenn Jordan.** (Columbia Home Entertainment cassette, color, 105 min., \$84.95)

Or "Only When I'm Self-Indulgent." Neil Simon has become one of those comedy writers who apparently think they can't be

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funny unless it's to show us how crummy life is.

This Simon story deals with a stage star (Marsha Mason) trying to cope with her estranged but all too understanding daughter (Kristy McNichol) and alcoholism (yuk, yuk). It takes a near-death incident (in this case an attempted rape) to make Mason come to her senses and realize what a wonderful life she has if she'd face up to it.

Tape quality is topnotch and, for me, the talky screenplay actually unfolds far better on the tube than in a theater. That's still not saying it's everyone's kind of comedy. (M.T.)□

PATERNITY (1981)★★

With Burt Reynolds, Beverly D'Angelo, Lauren Hutton. Directed by David Steinberg. (Paramount Home Video cassette, color, 94 min., \$84.95)

One of Reynolds' "important" movies, though not one of his best. Burt doesn't cry or have a nervous breakdown, but we know the movie's important because he doesn't pack a rod or drive a truck.

Burt plays the ultra-rich manager of Madison Square Garden. While satisfied with his bachelor lifestyle, he longs for a son to carry on his name. Unwilling to marry, he hires a surrogate mother (D'Angelo)—and you can guess the rest.

There's nothing really bad about this comedy, except that it's not particularly funny. It just meanders around with Reynolds pouting one minute and giving a boyish smile the next. It comes off better on the small screen than many of Burt's vehicles, since the only collisions on view are between D'Angelo and Reynolds in the living room. (M.T.)□

TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT (1981)★

With Robert Hays, Martin Mull, Art Carney. Directed by Gus Trikonis. (20th Century-Fox Video cassette, color, 100 min., \$69.95)

Take this cassette and—well, *they* started it. This is an incredibly boring, unfunny, plotless mess that saddles a good cast with a script that makes the average TV sitcom seem like Shakespeare.

Robert Hays plays a corporate executive sent back to his hometown to run one of the company's newly acquired breweries. Hays meets and ultimately turns old friends into new enemies when he tries to automate the production line.

Such wonderful comic performers as Martin Mull, Tim Thomerson, Eddie Albert and Art Carney are given lines that couldn't make a hyena laugh. The only redeeming factors are the fine tape quality and Johnny Paycheck's hit title tune—even though the song is played so often that you may begin hating it almost as much as the movie. (M.T.)□

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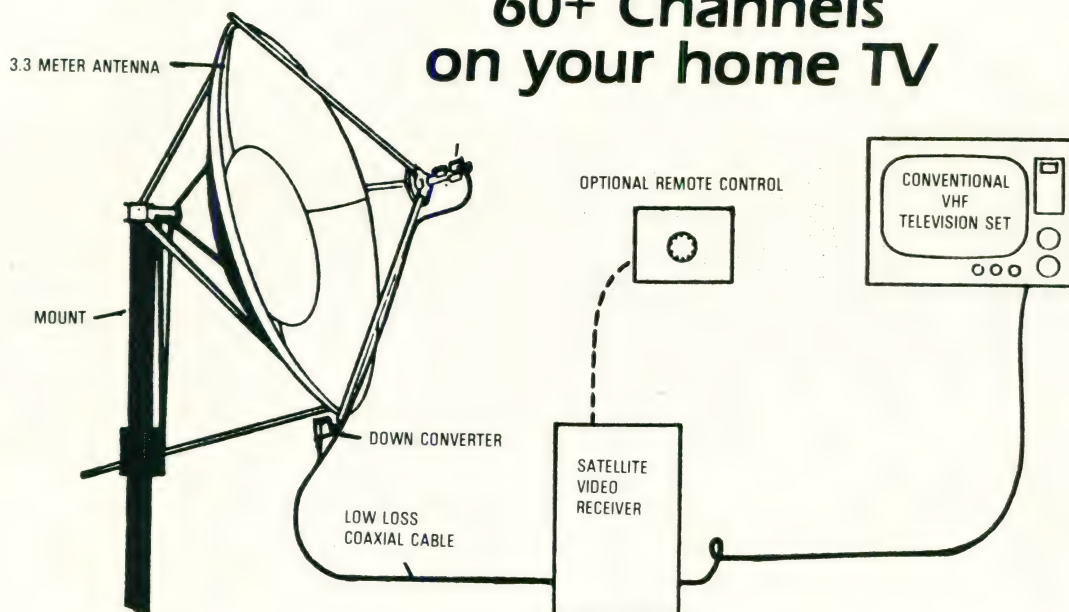
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Forty-plus Jane Fonda shows how to keep in shape at any age.

HOW-TO

†JANE FONDA'S WORKOUT

(1982) The two-time Oscar winning actress hosts an exercise class, from warm-ups and calisthenics to aerobic exercises and cool-downs. Companion piece to Fonda's best-selling book. (Karl Video; RCA SelectaVision CED)

•WINE APPRECIATION (1982)

Steps to evaluating, choosing, tasting and drinking wine, plus an instructional tour of various wine regions, including some in France. An interactive videodisc. (Optical Programming Associates, LV)

PERIODICAL

†VIDEOFASHION MONTHLY: THE ART OF DRESSING (1982)

Tips on women's fashion accessories, choosing colors and organizing wardrobes for career

KEY TO SYMBOLS

†Videocassette •Videodisc

and travel. Includes interviews with designers Halston, St. Laurent, Versaci. (Videofashion Monthly)

INTERACTIVE

•FUN AND GAMES (1982) A video encyclopedia of children's games and pastimes from around the world. (Optical Programming Associates, LV)

COMEDY

†ARTHUR (1981) High society hijinks with a poor-little-rich-man (Dudley Moore). With Liza Minnelli, John Gielgud. Initially for rental only. (20th Century-Fox Video)

†LOVE AND DEATH (1975) Director-screenwriter-star Woody Allen's parody of some classic Russian literature, with a twist of Ingmar Bergman imagery. With Diane Keaton, Harold Gould. (20th Century-Fox Video)

†OUTRAGEOUS! (1977) A Canadian-made tale of an off-beat relationship between a mental pa-

tient (Hollis McLaren) and a female impersonator (Craig Russell). (Columbia Home Entertainment)

†TUNNELVISION (1976) A satiric look at TV in 1985, featuring Chevy Chase, Howard Hesseman and Laraine Newman in skits and blackouts. (HarmonyVision)

†WHAT'S NEW, PUSSYCAT? (1965) Screenwriter Woody Allen's movie debut, in director Clive Donner's account of an on-the-edge editor (Peter O'Toole) and his analyst (Peter Sellers). With Ursula Andress, Paula Prentiss, Capucine. Initially for rental only. (20th Century-Fox Video)

†ZORRO, THE GAY BLADE

(1981) A satiric retelling of the Zorro legend, with George Hamilton as the twin sons of the original masked avenger. With Brenda Vaccaro, Lauren Hutton. Initially for rental only. (20th Century-Fox Video)

ANIMATION

†MISS PEACH AND THE KELLY SCHOOL KIDS (1982) Live-action and animated adventures of the comic-strip grade-school teacher (Deborah Grover) and her young social commentators. (MGM/CBS Home Video)

•WATERSHIP DOWN (1978) Dramatic, symbolic odyssey of a rabbit family on a trek of survival. Based on Richard Adams' bestseller. Featuring the voices of John Hurt, Zero Mostel, Ralph Richardson. First time on disc. (RCA SelectaVision, CED)

SERIALS

†FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE (1940) Buster Crabbe lives on as the outerspace adventurer. A 12-chapter Universal serial. First time on a single cassette, to be played only at EP or Beta III speeds. (Ampro Video)



Chevy Chase: Tunnelvision-ary.

†ZORRO'S FIGHTING LEGION (1939) Zorro (Reed Hadley) and his posse battle gold smugglers in Mexico. A 12-chapter Republic serial. First time on a single cassette, to be played only at EP or Beta III speeds. (Ampro Video)

SCI-FI

†LOOKER (1981) Behind-the-screens machinations by researchers and ad execs out to create the perfect TV model lead to a series of murders. Written and directed by Michael Crichton. Initially for rental only. (Warner Home Video)

†WESTWORLD (1973) Director-screenwriter Michael Crichton's depiction of a futuristic fantasy-resort "peopled" by robots. With



Richard Adams' symbolic rabbit family in Watership Down.



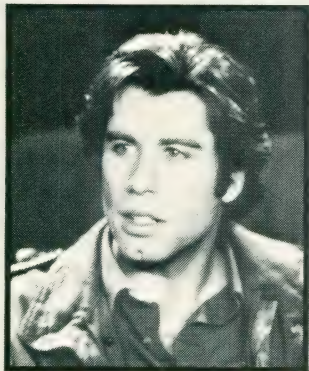
Woody meets the Grim Reaper in *Love and Death*.

Richard Benjamin, Yul Brynner, James Brolin. (MGM/CBS Home Video)

HORROR

†**CARS THAT EAT PEOPLE** (1978) A horror-comedy about townsfolk enthralled by supernatural automobiles. The first feature by celebrated Australian director Peter Weir. (Cultvideo)

•**THE FOG** (1979) Supernatural goings-on from director-screenwriter John (Halloween)



Blowout's Travolta: killjoy.

Carpenter. With Adrienne Barbeau, Hal Holbrook, John Houseman and scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis. First time on disc. (RCA SelectaVision, CED)

†**SLAVE OF THE CANNIBAL GOD** (1979) Ursula Andress, searching for her lost husband in a South Pacific jungle, discovers a woman-eating cult. (Wizard Video)

MYSTERY

†**BLOWOUT** (1981) A sound engineer (John Travolta) and a politician's floozy (Nancy Allen) hunt for a killer. Written and directed by Brian De Palma. Cassette initially for rental only. (Warner Home Video; RCA SelectaVision, CED)

†**WOLFEN** (1981) Police detective Albert Finney tracks down the source of a series of brutal, animalistic killings. Initially for rental only. (Warner Home Video)

CLASSICS

•**THE BIG SLEEP** (1946) Humphrey Bogart stars as private eye Philip Marlowe in his second movie with Lauren Bacall. A mystery thriller directed by Howard Hawks. With Dorothy Malone, Elisha Cook Jr. (RCA SelectaVision, CED)

†**SPELLBOUND** (1945) Director Alfred Hitchcock's study of a psychiatrist (Ingrid Bergman) and a strange patient (Gregory Peck), highlighted by a surrealistic dream sequence designed by Salvador Dali. (20th Century-Fox Video)

DRAMA

†**BODY HEAT** (1981) Screenwriter-director Lawrence Kasdan's neo-film noir depiction of a murder plot devised by trysting couple William Hurt and Kathleen Turner—and its consequences. With Richard Crenna. Initially for rental only. (Warner Home Video)

•**DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER** (1971) Sean Connery, in his final outing to date as superspy James Bond, seeks to stop yet another would-be world tyrant. With Jill St. John, Charles Gray. (RCA SelectaVision, CED)

†**FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE** (1963) Sean Connery as James Bond encounters spies, Daniela Bianchi and Lotte Lenya's deadly shoes behind the Iron Curtain. Initially for rental only. (20th Century-Fox Video)

†**THE GOOD EARTH** (1937) Paul Muni and Oscar-winner Luise Rainer in an adaptation of Pearl S. Buck's epic novel about a Chinese farm family. Famous for its special effects during a locust attack. (MGM/CBS Home Video)

†**RICH AND FAMOUS** (1981) Two college roommates (Candice Bergen, Jacqueline Bisset) share career and carnal exploits throughout a 20-year friendship. A George Cukor-directed comedy-drama, based on John Van Druten's *Old Acquaintance* (previously filmed

IN THE WORKS

It's official: For the new stereo CED-format videodisc player that RCA will bring out in May, RCA SelectaVision's first two stereo discs will be *Bob Welch and Friends* in concert and *The Who's* documentary *The Kids Are Alright*. . . . RCA will also rock with upcoming stereo discs featuring **The Allman Brothers**, ex-Jefferson Starship captain **Marty Ballin** and a commemorative show at Passaic, NJ's Capitol Theatre, with **The Allman Brothers**, **Steve Forbert**, **Edgar Winter** and **Southside Johnny**. . . .

Moor news from MGM/CBS Home Video: The recent Broadway production of Shakespeare's *Othello* with **James Earl Jones** and **Christopher Plummer** has been taped for videocassette and disc release. . . . The company has also acquired rights to a host of foreign-language movies, including **Marcel Camus'** *Black Orpheus*, **Francis Truffaut's** *Shoot the Piano Player*, **Jean Renoir's** *Grand Illusion* and **Roman Polanski's** first feature, *Knife in the Water*. . . .

The head wizard at scrappy independent Wizard Video (*I Spit on Your Grave*), producer **Charles Band**, plans to produce three pictures this year for theatrical and videocassette release: *The Trance*, science-fictioner *The Touch* and a fantasy-adventure tale, *Projection of Taylor*. Wizard's new spinoff company, Cultvideo, has also begun to release esoteric horror/science-fiction fare on cassette. . . . Upcoming Fotomat programs adapted from *Family Handyman* magazine will show all about *Remodeling Your Kitchen*, *Installing a New Bathroom*, *Adding a Room* and otherwise refurbishing the homestead.

—Frank Lovece

with Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins). Initially for rental only. (MGM/CBS Home Video)

swashbuckler of old California. (Disney Home Video)

†**THE SEVENTH VOYAGE OF SINBAD** (1958) Fantasy-adventures of a Middle Eastern buccaneer (Kerwin Mathews) in ancient times. Featuring Ray Harryhausen special effects and a Bernard Herr-

†**THE TIN DRUM** (1980) Oscar-winning adaptation of the Gunter Grass novel about a philosophic child-man in pre- and post-WWII Germany. With David Bennent, Mario Adorf. (Warner Home Video)



James Bond and Pussy Galore find *Diamonds Are Forever*.

mann score. (Columbia Home Entertainment)

†**THE SIGN OF ZORRO** (1957) Feature compilation of Disney's "Zorro" TV-series episodes, starring Guy Williams as the masked

MUSIC

†**JIMI PLAYS BERKELEY** (1971) Pioneering electric guitarist Hendrix in a concert not long before his death. (HarmonyVision) □

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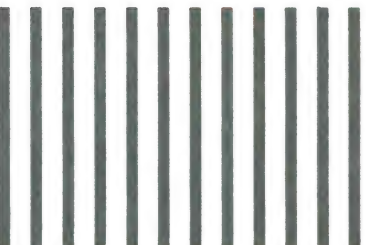
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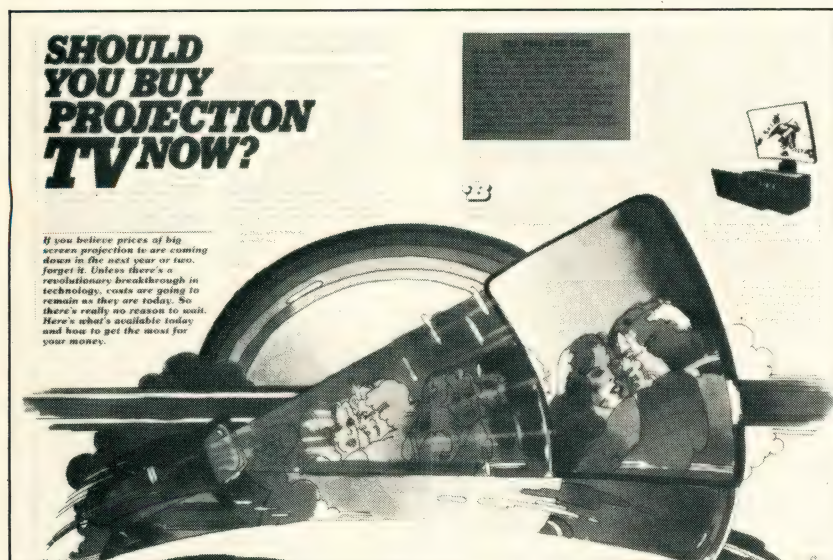
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Worth catching on cable and broadcast TV



Stevie Nicks: going solo with an HBO special from L.A.

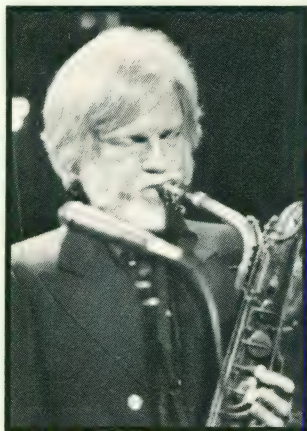
SPECIALS

THE ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS ABC, Mon., Mar. 29, 9 p.m.

Will the Academy be seeing *Reds*? Go Dunaway? Be Fonda *Golden Pond*? Only Price Waterhouse knows for sure. Johnny Carson will again host the movie-industry awards gala.

SALUTE TO FRANK CAPRA CBS, March, TBA*

Mr. Capra goes to Tinseltown to be honored March 4 with the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award. (The telecast will run later in the month.) The triple Academy Award-winning director of *It Happened One Night*, *It's a Wonderful Life* and many other self-described "Capra-com" movies joins the ranks of such past winners as Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, John Ford and Orson Welles. Taped at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.



Mulligan on Bravo: sax object.

DRAMA

THE RESURRECTION OF LADY LESTER CBS Cable, Mon., Mar. 29, 8:30 to 10 p.m.†

To jazz saxophonist Lester Young, anyone who made beautiful music was a "lady"—such as Lady Day herself, Billie Holiday. Dick Anthony Williams portrays Young in his final moments, flashing back to the jazz life of the Birdland era. This TV version of playwright Oyama's original Yale production will be toned down, however. But it is in stereo.

MY BODY, MY CHILD ABC, Mon., Apr. 5, 9 to 11 p.m.

Another installment of the ABC Theatre, which recently presented an acclaimed TV version of *The Elephant Man*. This time a pregnant mother of three (Vanessa Redgrave) and her husband (Joseph Campanella) face a tragic choice: to keep or to abort a nascent child that will be born deformed. With Jack Albertson in one of his final roles.

AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE: MEDAL OF HONOR RAG PBS, Tues., Apr. 6, 9 to 10:30 p.m.†

When Dale Jackson (Damien Lake) returned home from Vietnam with the Congressional Medal of Honor, all he could feel was that he was fixin' to die. And that's just what Dwight Johnson, the real-life Army sergeant upon whom Dale is based, did. He was killed while holding up a Detroit supermarket. Playwright Tom Cole's much-toured work delves into the atmosphere and emotions behind one peculiar tragedy.

COMEDY

EUNICE CBS, Mon., Mar. 15, 9:30 to 11 p.m.

As part of Carol Burnett's old variety show, the already classic "Eunice" sketches featuring Burnett, Harvey Korman and Vicki Lawrence blended belly laughs with a kind of provocative despair. This new four-act

the TV sitcom, here's a new cable version with Richard Thomas, Bess Armstrong, Barbara Barrie and Hans Conreid (in one of his final performances). Taped before a live audience at the Moore Theatre in Seattle.

GALLAGHER: TWO REAL Showtime, Mon., Apr. 19, 8 to 9 p.m.†

The unpredictable improv comic is steadily improv-ing, with rapid sight gags and slapstick routines. This latest in what's become a series of Gallagher specials was taped in Los Angeles.

THE SHAKESPEARE PLAYS: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM PBS, Mon., Apr. 19, 8 to 10:30 p.m.†

It's a comedy of Eros when an impish fairy starts playing mystical matchmaker with a bunch of poor, dumb mortals. A new version of one of the Bard's most popular plays.

SPORTS

TOURNAMENT PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP CBS, Thurs. to Sun., Mar. 18 to 21, times TBA*

The year's richest golf match, with \$500,000 prize money in the pot.



The Singing Playmates: in shape for Escapade.

teleplay, written by Burnett Show vets Dick Clair and Jenna McMahon, also features Betty White and Ken Berry.

STANDING ROOM ONLY: BAREFOOT IN THE PARK HBO, Sun., Mar. 21, 8 to 10:30 p.m.†

Love, Neil Simon style. If you missed the Broadway play, the movie and

1981 champ Ray Floyd will be teed off with likely contenders Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Tom Watson and other top week-in/week-out tournament pros.

NCAA HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP ESPN, Thurs. to Sat., Mar. 25 to 27, 7:30 to 10 p.m.

The University of Wisconsin will defend its title in semi-final and final ac-

* To Be Announced. † Program to be repeated other dates and times. Schedules subject to change. All times EST.

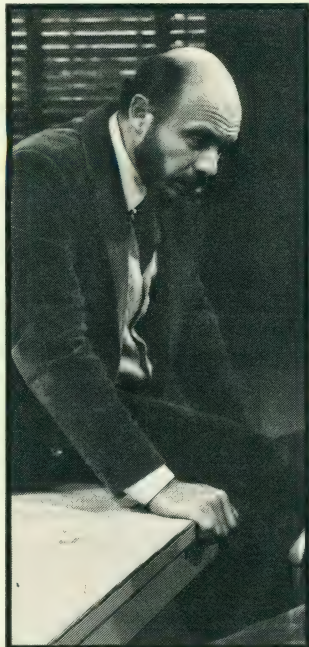
tion at the Providence, RI Civic Center. Transmitted live.

CONSUMERISM

VIDEO VISION

WNYC, New York, Sun., Apr. 4, 11 to 11:30 p.m.

Know that cliché about the sincerest form of flattery? Well, here's a new weekly TV show that VR readers may think has the ring of familiarity, with



Hector Elizando, Damien Lake in PBS' Medal of Honor Rag.

regular features called "Previews and Reviews," "New Products," "Video News" and "Flashes and Glimpses." We haven't seen an episode yet, but the April 4 show sounds promising. VR editor David Hajdu is the guest.

MUSIC

THE SONGWRITERS: ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

CBS Cable, Wed., Mar. 24, 9:30 to 10:30 p.m.†

Name that tune—and Arthur Schwartz probably wrote it. The 81-year-old pop and Broadway hit-maker reminisces and goes through some of his considerable songbook with Nancy Dussault, Ed Evanko and Judy Kaye.

STEVIE NICKS IN CONCERT

HBO, Sat., Mar. 27, 8 to 9 p.m.†

A solo performance, just in the Nicks of time. As the fortunes of soft-rock supergroup Fleetwood Mac continue to go nowhere in particular, those of its sometime lead vocalist and songwriter have gone platinum. This Los Angeles show features songs from her recent *Bella Donna* album as well as some big Mac hits. Sorry, no Tom Petty-ness.

JAZZ AT THE MAINTENANCE SHOP

PBS, Saturdays, Mar. 27 to June 26, 10 to 11 p.m.†

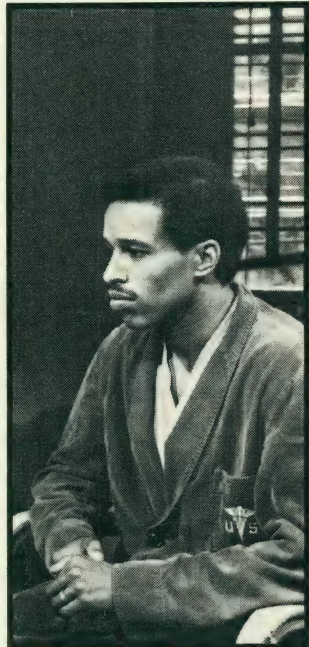
Performances by jazz giants Bill Evans, Dexter Gordon, Woody

Shaw and Phil Woods make up the bulk of the 14 shows in this collection of notable repeats. The series was originally taped at Iowa State University several years ago.

THE BRAVO JAZZ FEST

Bravo, Sat., Apr. 10, 8 to 9 p.m.†

A Gerry Mulligan stew, with the baritone saxophonist and his jazz quartet at The Station in Wilkes-Barre, PA. In stereo.



DANCE

TELEFRANCE:

SWAN LAKE, ACT II

SPN, Sun., Mar. 21, 11 to 11:30 p.m.†

An excerpt from Tchaikovsky's ballet classic, as performed by Paris Opera Ballet stars Clair Motte and Cyril Atanasof in Paris. Orchestra conductor not known at press time.

DANCE IN AMERICA: PAUL TAYLOR/TWO LANDMARK DANCES

PBS, Mon., Apr. 12, 8 to 9 p.m.†

"Brilliant and infuriating" is how Anna Kisselgoff, *New York Times* dance critic, described *Le Sacre du Printemps: The Rehearsal*, one of two Taylor works performed at the 1981 American Dance Festival. The other, *Arden Court*, was called a "work of genius" by critic Clive Barnes.

OPERA

LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER:

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

PBS, Sat., Apr. 10, 8 to 11:30 p.m.

The Donizetti classic of love, madness and death—with one of the most famous marital squabbles in opera. New York City Opera soprano Gianna Rolandi has the title role, with tenor Barry McCauley, baritone Brent Ellis and bass Robert Hale also heading the cast. Judith Somogi conducts. Broadcast live.

DOCUMENTARY

MIDDLETOWN

PBS, Wednesdays, Mar. 24 to Apr. 28, 9 p.m.†

On the town—Muncie, IN, that is, a community as quintessentially American in some ways as Winesburg, OH or Yoknapatawpha County. Emmy, Peabody and Academy Award winning documentarian Peter Davis (*The Selling of the Pentagon*, *Hearts and Minds*) probes the microcosmic nature of the town in six weekly programs—some an hour, some 90 minutes. Programs will examine marriage, religion, small business, elections, local sports and high-school life.

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

ABC, Mon., Mar. 29, 8 to 9 p.m.

His story. The celebrated operatic tenor and tennis enthusiast goes home to Modena, Italy for a few duets with his papa and then back to America for a few sets (of tennis, that is) with John McEnroe. Composer-conductor John Williams also guests.

CREATIVITY: THE WORLD OF NORMAN LEAR

PBS, Fri., Apr. 9 and 16, 9 to 10 p.m.†

When writer-producer Lear's *All in the Family* became a trendsetter in American TV comedy, it unleashed programming marked by both new approaches and, paradoxically, many of the same old clichés. "A commercial fellow," as he calls himself, Lear and host Bill Moyers dig into some of the roots of mass-media creativity.

ABC NEWS CLOSE-UP

ABC, April, TBA*

By April 25, Israel is scheduled to



Thomas, Armstrong: Barefoot first.

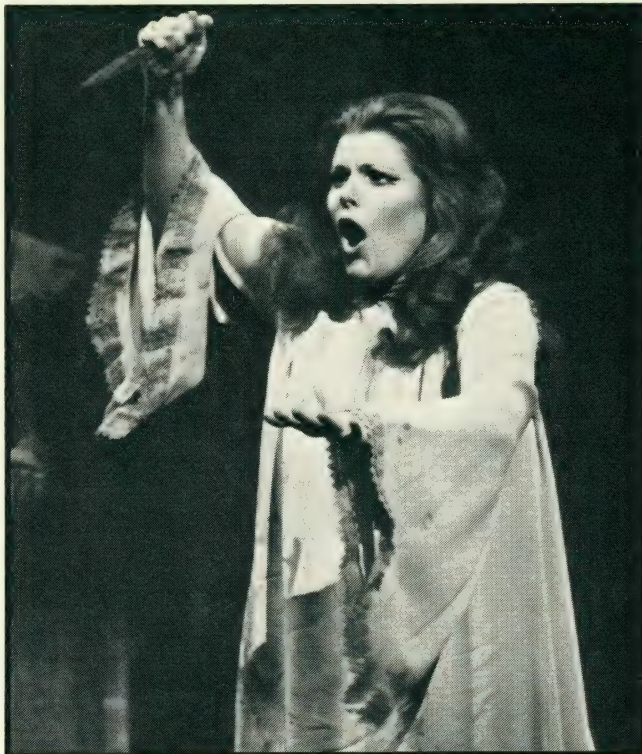
turn a disputed parcel of land over to Egypt. As the date nears and tensions mount, the yet-untitled *Close-up* plans to examine the event and its consequences, as well as interview leaders on both sides of the political and religious issues.

VARIETY

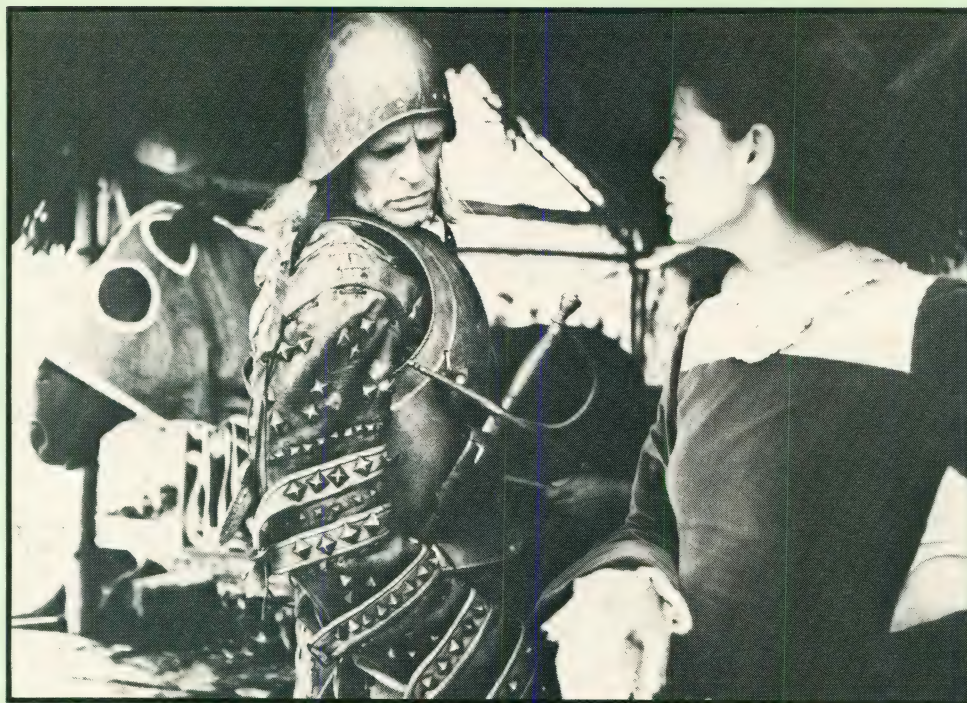
PLAYBOY

Escapade, Fri., Mar. 19, 8 to 9 p.m.†

Attention, men. Not only do you get an uninhibited portrait of sultry actress Barbara Carrera (of *Masada*) but a full dose of the Singing Playmates. Centerfold Karen Witter is sex object of the month. (Cont.)



Gianna Rolandi goes mad as Lucia for PBS.



Klaus Kinski as the conquistador Aguirre: moviemaking that leaves you wondering in amazement.

SPECIAL NOTICE

This month we inaugurate a new service for the benefit of those many readers who enjoy movies not yet on videocassette or videodisc and who like to use their VCRs to tape such movies from TV for later viewing (at hours of their own convenience) or to add in whole or in part to their personal libraries.

All the capsule movie reviews within this "Coming on TV" section are strictly of those movies scheduled for showings during the coming month by major broadcast-TV or cable-TV stations. The station or stations showing the movies are indicated beneath the movie titles. (Since exact day and time of showings vary in different parts of the country, check a local listing or station guide.)

Program sources included this month are the major movie-showing superstations (WGN Chicago, WOR New York, WTBS Atlanta) which broadcast over the air in some regions and via cable in others, plus major cable- and pay-TV networks (Black Entertainment Television, Bravo, CBS Cable, Cinemax, Escapade, Home Box Office, The Movie Channel, Showtime, SPN and Wometco Home Theatre).

So far, the major broadcast-TV networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS) have had difficulty providing us with information about their scheduled movies by presstime. CBS, for example, claims that schedules for its *Late Show* and other movie series are made up only a week or so before showing, and are not always available even to weekly publications.

The reviews in this section each month will be a mixture of new reviews and some reprints from the 5,000 capsule reviews we have published over the first two years of *Video Review*, all re-edited with the current month's showings in mind.

MOVIES

AGUIRRE, THE WRATH OF GOD (1972) ★ ★ ★

CBS Cable

Or "Kinski, the Wrath of Herzog." Reports on the battles between West German director Werner Herzog and actor Klaus Kinski during the making of this movie are already legendary. But even if they aren't apparent on screen, other hardships are and you'll no doubt spend much of the hour-and-a-half wondering in amazement about the moviemaking process here. Shot on location in the mountains and jungles of Peru, the picture details the historical quest of a band of conquistadores led by Aguirre (Kinski)

set on finding the gold of El Dorado. The opening tracking shot of the expedition descending a mountain is so stunning you've probably never seen anything like it—as is the picture's final circular shot of Aguirre standing alone on his corpse-strewn and monkey-laden raft. Some of the photography is breathtaking, and Kinski is demonic as hell as Aguirre—Attila, the Scourge meet Aguirre, the Wrath. With Ruy Guerra, Helena Rojo. (Color, 95 min.) (W.S.)

AMERICAN POP (1980) ★ ★ ★

Home Box Office, The Movie Channel

Ralph Bakshi gets back on the track. The famed animation director who put the "adult" in adult car-

animation fans, even though some may find the picture's theme slightly superficial. (Color, 84 min.) (M.T.)

ASPHALT JUNGLE (1950) ★ ★ ★

Showtime

High-caliber performances shine throughout this gritty tale of lust and greed. Louis Calhern and Stirling Hayden are perfect weasels burrowing through the underworld. Director John Huston guided a choice ensemble through a myriad of plot twists involving a heist and an attempt to foil it. History-making standout: young Marilyn Monroe as Angela Phindlay. (B&W, 112 min.) (D.M.)

BATTLEGROUND (1949) ★ ★ ★

Cinemax, Showtime

Credited with having introduced a new "realism" in war movies, this slick MGM drama won an Oscar in '49 for its script. Van Johnson, John Hodiak, Ricardo Montalban and George Murphy head a uniformly effective cast in William Wellman's retelling of events that took place during WWII's Battle of the Bulge. The picture was also famous in its time because of the fact that it was lensed entirely within the confines of a Hollywood sound stage, something which may not be as apparent on TV screens. (B&W, 118 min.) (E.H.)

BREAKING POINT (1976) ★ ★

Cinemax

Not walking as tall as he once did, Bo Svenson spills his guts about the Mafia in court. They return the favor by trying to spill his guts, literally. The government relocates Bo and his family, but the mob catches up with him and the ultra-violence begins. Directed by Bob



Monroe with Calhern in *Asphalt Jungle*: a matter of curves and twists.

Clark. With Robert Culp, John Colicos. (Color, 92 min.) (J.M.)

BRUTE FORCE (1947) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

"We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore!" Long



Daughter's Haver: cuddler.

before Peter Finch in *Network*, Burt Lancaster and fellow prisoners were saying much the same to penal corrections officer Hume Cronyn and his prison guards. Here's one of the best and toughest prison movies ever—laced with cold, tough realism. Lancaster, Cronyn, Charles Bickford, Howard Duff, Sam Levene, Yvonne De Carlo and Ella Raines are all excellent. Directed by Jules Dassin. (B&W, 98 min.) (J.M.)

THE CADDY (1953) ★

Superstation WTBS

Definitely under par. In this so-so Martin and Lewis comedy, Jerry is a pretty good golfer, but crowds terrify him. So, instead, he coaches Dino. There are a few funny moments (very few). If you're a devout enough fan to tape this one, well, "That's Amore." (B&W, 95 min.) (J.M.)

CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE

(1947) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

So what if Tyrone Power's Spanish accent is lousy? He's properly handsome and certainly energetic as the hero of this romantic swashbuckler about the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Director Henry King makes maximum use of exotic locales, and the supporting cast is generally good, particularly Cesar Romero as Hernando Cor-

tez. The movie also sports one of Alfred Newman's best romantic scores. (B&W, 140 min.) (C.K.)

THE CAPTAIN'S PARADISE

(1953) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

A surprisingly rakish Alec Guinness plays a bigamous ferryboat captain with one wife in Gibraltar and another in Tangiers. The busy way he juggles a sultry Yvonne De Carlo and a lighthearted Celia Johnson seems like Hollywood screwball comedy at first, but the movie's ironic wit turns out to be much closer to such Italian satires as *Divorce—Italian Style* and *Seduced and Abandoned*—and just as funny. (B&W, 80 min.) (R.S.)

CLEOPATRA (1963) ★ ★

Superstation WOR

This overblown, overpublicized spectacle is not quite the fiasco its detractors would have you believe, although it's certainly far from great. 20th Century-Fox spent a record 22-million smackers—most of it is readily apparent on the screen—and reportedly lost most of it when the picture flopped at the box office following disastrous reviews. Elizabeth Taylor is strikingly beautiful as Cleo and Richard Burton makes a dashing Marc Antony—but Rex Harrison as Julius Caesar walks away with the acting honors and makes the most of so-so material and limited screen time. Small-screen viewing will rob home audiences of the visual splendor that was the movie's best asset in theaters, and at four hours *Cleopatra* is hardly the breezy entertainment you'd want to tape for subsequent rescreenings. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. (Color, 243 min.) (E.H.)

COBRA WOMAN (1944) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

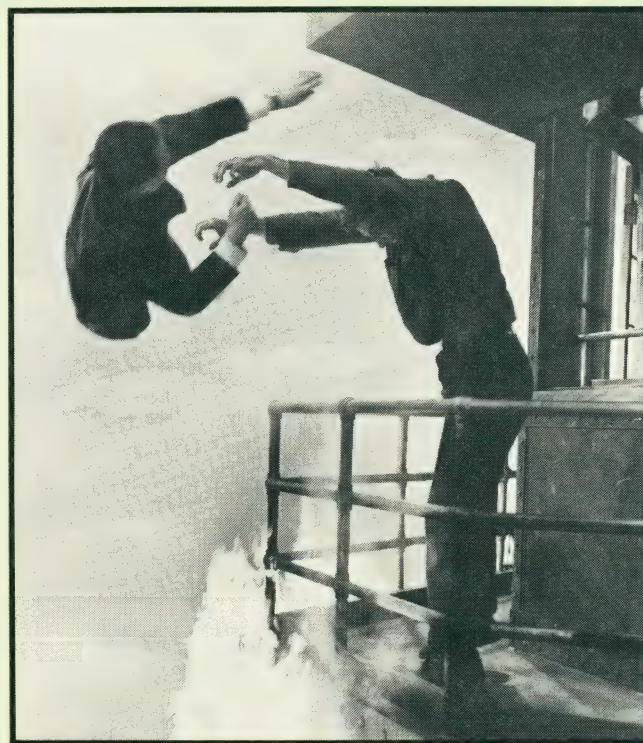
Maria Montez was the queen of Universal's '40s Technicolor tropical adventures of the strictly escapist-hokum variety (*Gypsy Wildcat*, *Arabian Nights*, *Siren of Atlantis*, *Sudan*, *White Savage*, etc.). This is one of the slickest of the genre—in fact, something of a camp classic. Montez plays a dual role as twin sisters. The good one is kidnapped on the night of her wedding—to Jon Hall, natch—and whisked off to Cobra Island, where her reigning evil sister keeps throwing people into the nearby volcano as sacrifices. Hall and friend Sabu take off in pursuit of the good Maria, but encounter all sorts of villainies and near-demises before they rescue her—just as the volcano erupts, of course. Director Robert Siodmak keeps the emphasis on the action, and in the '40s no one worried whether or not the exotically costumed Montez could act. (She had to go to France in 1950 to prove that she *could*, in a couple of modern dramas with then-husband Jean-Pierre Aumont.) With Lon Chaney Jr., Edgar Barrier, Mary Nash. (Color, 70 min.) (R.H.)

COMMAND DECISION

(1948) ★ ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

An absolutely topnotch MGM war movie in all departments. Clark Gable has one of his best "mature" roles as the commander of an American airfield located in WWII England. He's faced with some difficult decisions, and the resulting tension and interaction makes for one of director Sam Wood's finest achievements. And what a supporting cast—Walter Pidgeon, Van Johnson, Brian Donleavy, Charles Bickford, Edward Arnold, John Hodiak and Cameron Mitchell, to name a few. The play on which this Sidney Franklin-produced movie was based was still running on Broadway while Metro's version was in production. You'll want to view this one many times, so tape while the taping's good. Local TV showings are often cut. (B&W, 112 min.) (E.H.)



Lancaster in action in *Brute Force*: violent problem-solving.

CRAZY MAMA (1975) ★ ★

Showtime

While not ranking with such "Mama" classics as *Big Bad Mama* or *Bloody Mama*, this Jonathan Demme effort could be a lot worse. Cloris Leachman is the picture's Ma Barker character, trying to make ends meet by robberies and shoot-outs during the Depression. For action fans, this Roger Corman-produced opus offers the expected number of car crashes and machine-gun massacres, and there's even a moral of sorts. With Stuart Whitman and Ann Sothern. (Color, 82 min.) (M.T.)

CREATURE FROM BLACK LAKE

(1976) ★ ★

Superstation WOR

No relation to the one from the

Black Lagoon. Two college kids (John David Carson, Bill Thurman) go to the Louisiana swamps after hearing about a sighting of the legendary Bigfoot. The opposition they receive from the townspeople is nothing compared to the problems the Creature itself gives them. This low-budgeter has some genuinely suspenseful moments whenever Bigfoot is at hand. (Color, 97 min.) (J.M.)

CRY UNCLE (1971) ★ ★

Escapade

The private-eye business gets an almost pornographic ribbing in this pre-*Rocky* spoof by John Avildsen. Allen Garfield plays a horny, overweight detective on a blackmail case in this originally X-rated picture, re-edited to an R. The constant string of expletives, naked bodies, simulated sex and unsubtle innuendo are sure to keep this one off noncable TV stations

unless some station editor further strips it to a 15-minute featurette. (Color, 87 min.) (M.T.)

THE DAUGHTER OF ROSIE

O'GRADY (1950) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WTBS

Cute and cuddly June Haver is the titular tyke of this period musical, directed by David Butler and lushly photographed in Technicolor (although some TV prints I've seen, depending on when they were printed, haven't always reflected the quality of color saturation of the original). Gordon MacRae is the handsome beau, and together he and June sing many turn-of-the-century favorites. Look for a young Debbie Reynolds in a prominent supporting role. Good family fare. (Color, 104 min.) (E.H.) (Cont.)

RATINGS

- ★★★★ Outstanding
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Average
- ★ Below Average

This month's reviewers:
Rick Foley, Roy Hemming,
Ed Hulse, Cheryl Kallough,
Frank Lovece, Doug Mendini,
Robert Schirmer, William
Sites, Mark Trost.

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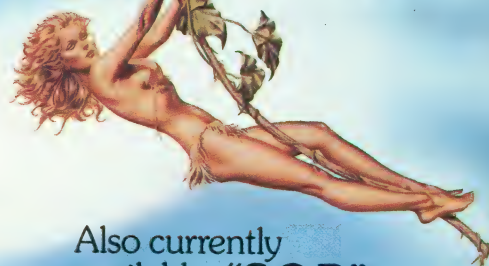
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Based on the characters created by Edgar Rice Burroughs

DEATH IN VENICE (1971) ★ ★ ★**The Movie Channel**

From Thomas Mann's novel. A frail, erudite German writer (Dirk Bogarde) vacations in Italy's City of Water to soothe his feverish intellect. Instead, the heat, a mysterious plague and a beautiful Polish boy combine to work over his romantic sensibilities to the point of overload. The use of music by Mahler on the soundtrack substitutes for the novel's lengthy interior monologues on the tensions between romantic and classical beauty, and it succeeds in invoking the spirit if not the letter of the main character's obsessive quest. Luchino Visconti directs in languid, meditative strokes, and Bogarde manages to express a subtlety and intensity of emotions that the script (appropriately sparse) can't begin to imply. With Mark Burns, Marisa Berenson, Sylvana Mangano, Luigi Battaglia and Bjorn Anderson as the young Polish Ganymede. (Color, 130 min.) (W.S.)

THE EXTERMINATOR (1980) ★ ★**Showtime**

This one kills more than bugs. Robert Ginty portrays a Vietnam War vet trying to adjust to civilian life but finding that New York is no place to do it. Violence in the street and a long-hidden secret about his war experiences turn the vet into a bloodthirsty psychotic, who takes revenge on those who did him and New York wrong. It's mostly an ex-

cuse for graphically presented executions and not the challenging *Death Wish* kind of saga some have labeled it. (Color, 100 min.) (M.T.)

FATE IS THE HUNTER**(1964) ★ ★ ★****Superstation WGN**

And a plane is the hunt. This farfetched but engrossing drama



Ginty (left) in *The Exterminator*: Is New York worse than Vietnam?

has Glenn Ford as the airport head who refuses to believe that the pilot (Rod Taylor) was responsible for a crash that's under investigation. Instead, he believes the plane was meant to crash—that fate was the cause. The performances are believable even if the story isn't. With Suzanne Pleshette, Jane Russell, Wally Cox, Nancy Kwan. (B&W, 106 min.) (J.M.)

FATHER'S LITTLE DIVIDEND**(1951) ★ ★ ★****Superstation WOR**

Vincente Minnelli's sequel to his '50 hit *Father of the Bride* features the same terrific cast but lacks the vitality of the original. Spencer Tracy and Joan Bennett are again the parents of Elizabeth Taylor and new son-in-law Don Taylor (no relation),

young Liz Taylor is breathtakingly beautiful. Good family fun. (B&W, 82 min.) (E.H.)

FIRST FAMILY (1981) ★**Cinemax**

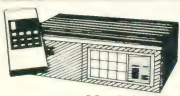
An incredibly unfunny "comedy" that wastes some topnotch talent. Writer-director Buck Henry seems to have spent most of his energy amassing the cast—Bob Newhart, Madeline Kahn, Gilda Radner, Fred Willard—and left none for giving them a good script. What emerges is a witless, pointless farce about a fictional Presidential family. Far below the up-and-down standards of Henry's contributions to TV's *Saturday Night Live*. Boo. (Color, 103 min.) (E.H.)

FROM HELL TO VICTORY**(1980) ★****Wometco Home Theatre**

From cliché to cliché is more like it. After a promising start—focusing on six friends in 1939 Paris: two French, two American, one British, one German—everything deteriorates rapidly into one of the most hackneyed movies ever made with a WWII background. The six separate and sometimes contrived intertwined personal stories get in each other's way, and just about every plot development has been used before. The dialogue is sometimes laughably inept and, even for a war movie, the violence is overly graphic. Only three of the original six friends make it to a Paris

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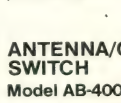


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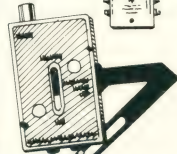
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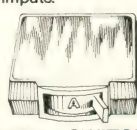


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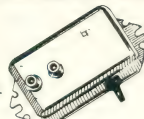


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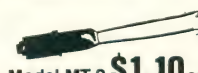


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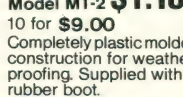
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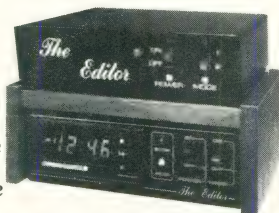
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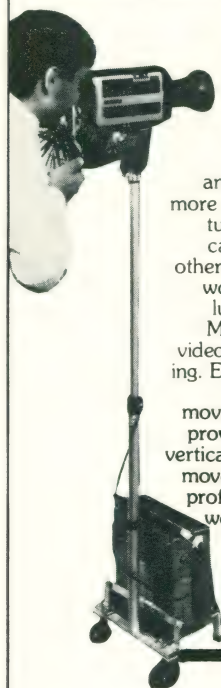
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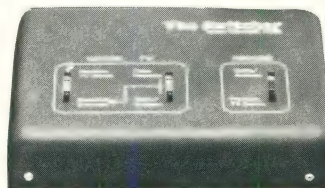
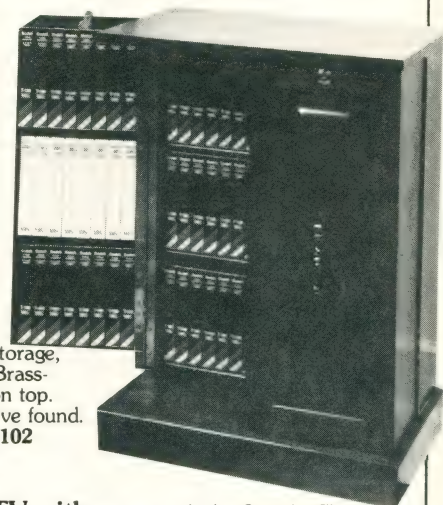
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reunion after the war, but then (as one of the characters says) war is hell. With George Peppard, George Hamilton, Horst Buchholz, Sam Wanamaker, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Capucine. (Color, 100 min.) (R.H.)



Global Affair's Hope...

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM
(1968) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WOR

And indeed it did. This burlesque about the sloppiest slave in imperial Rome (Zero Mostel) plotting his

freedom becomes a lively comedy of errors under the expert direction of Richard Lester. Stephen Sondheim wrote the music, and there are hilarious performances by Phil Silvers, Jack Gilford and the great Buster Keaton. And the chase scene is the best before *The French Connection*. (Color, 99 min.) (R.S.)

THE GENERAL DIED AT DAWN
(1936) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WTBS

A compelling, beautifully made '30s drama with Gary Cooper cast as a soldier-of-fortune in wartorn China. He falls in love with Madeleine Carroll after they're captured by a sinister warlord (Akim Tamiroff, in one of his best early acting jobs), who plans on executing them both. Director Lewis Milestone (just a few years after his unforgettable *All Quiet on the Western Front*) creates a simultaneously romantic and mysterious Oriental atmosphere. John O'Hara, who wrote the original story, makes a cameo appearance as a reporter on board a train. An "oldie" that holds up much better than most more recent dramas. (B&W, 97 min.) (E.H.)

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT

(1947) ★ ★ ★ ★

Superstation WGN

You don't have to be Jewish to eat up this well-directed expose of anti-Semitism in '40s America. Gregory Peck plays a stern, idealistic writer who pretends he is Jewish in order

to get a story on prejudice firsthand. One of the first post-World War II movies to deal with American middle-class bigotry, it holds up well for its realism and intelligence. The fine supporting cast includes John Garfield, Dorothy McGuire, Dean Stockwell, June Havoc and Celeste Holm (who won an Oscar as the sharp-tongued fashion editor). Directed by Elia Kazan. (B&W, 118 min.) (R.S.)

GIRLFRIENDS (1978) ★ ★ ★

Cinemax

This story of the life and times of a young photographer in New York is fast becoming a cult favorite. Director Claudia Weill went on to make the popular *Now It's My Turn*, but she hasn't yet matched the humor and sincerity of this first effort. It is adorned with the marvelous acting of Melanie Mayron as the aspiring photographer. With Anita Skinner, Eli Wallach and Viveca Lindfors. (Color, 88 min.) (R.S.)

A GLOBAL AFFAIR (1964) ★ ★

Showtime

Another in the seemingly endless series of unfunny, latter-day Bob Hope starrers, with this one even more cutesy-poo than most. Ol' Ski Nose is at the U.N. this time around, chaperoning a baby who becomes an object of international interest among the female representatives. With Yvonne De Carlo, Robert Sterling. Directed by Jack Arnold. (B&W, 84 min.) (E.H.)

HANGAR 18 (1981) ★

Wometco Home Theatre

A throwback to '50s sci-fi of the "keep watching the skies" school—a throwback which should have been thrown out. Darren McGavin gets special billing as a NASA hot-shot



... De Carlo: no Cuisinart.

who's assigned to examine a captured UFO after the extraterrestrial craft has interfered with a manned space probe (Gary Collins and James Hampton play the astronauts). In this post-Watergate era, however, the scripters elected

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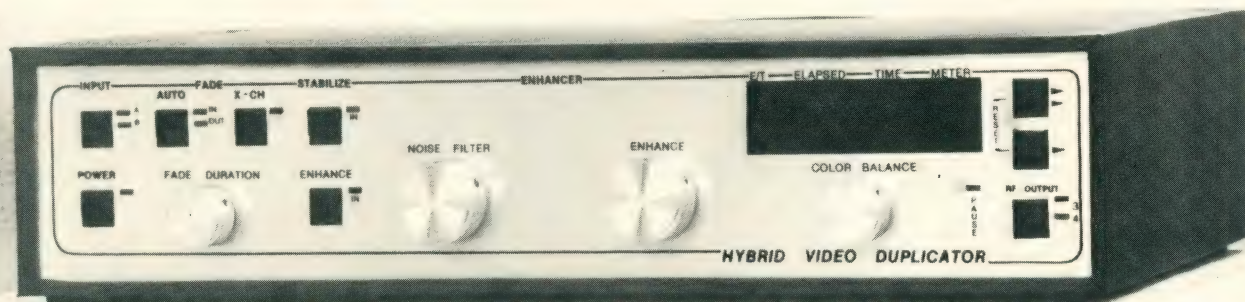
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to play up a conspiracy plot in which government officials and Pentagon bigwigs decide to eliminate everyone associated with the investigation. The incredibly sappy story is reminiscent of the recent *Capricorn One*, but not nearly as good (which isn't saying much). (Color, 97 min.) (E.H.)

HARDLY WORKING (1981) ★
Cinemax

Hardly worth it. It's incredible to me that anybody, anywhere this side of Paris, would give Jerry Lewis money to make a new movie—but someone did, and they got just what they deserved. Jerry wrote, directed and stars in this anachronistic throwback to some of his '60s drivel, complete with the mugging, whining, and moronic carryings-on of his weaker efforts. One bright note: Deanna Lund, once a promising Universal starlet and the attractive female lead of Irwin Allen's *Land of the Giants* TV show—the worst episode of which was better than this alleged comedy. (Color, 91 min.) (E.H.)

HOUSE OF WAX (1953) ★ ★ ★
Superstation WOR

This remake of Warner's 1933 classic *Mystery of the Wax Museum* holds up well on TV despite the loss of the original 3D effect of theatrical showings. Vincent Price has one of his best Grand Guignol-style romps as an insane, disfigured sculptor who "creates" lifelike wax statues for

his Chamber of Horrors by murdering people and dipping their corpses in boiling wax. This version improves on the original by altering the setting from contemporary New York in the '30s to gas-lit London in the Victorian era, an atmosphere admirably maintained by director Andre de Toth. The supporting cast (including Frank Lovejoy, Phyllis Kirk and Carolyn Jones) is okay without being especially inspired, and you'll get a kick out of spotting young Charles Bronson (billed as Buchinski) in one of his earliest screen appearances. (Color, 88 min.) (E.H.)

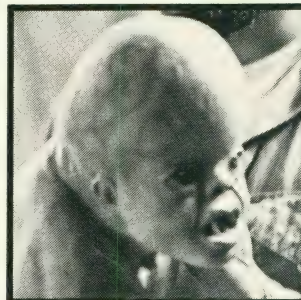
HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY (1941) ★ ★ ★
Superstation WGN

How gray was our memory. John Ford's film of a Welsh coal-mining family won several Academy Awards, but they obviously weren't for social realism. It's unlikely Wales was ever quite like these Hollywood-atmosphere dollhouse cottages. Still, much of the movie survives as a simple, well-acted family drama, thanks to Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Donald Crisp, Roddy McDowall and Sara Allgood. (B&W, 118 min.) (R.S.)

IT'S ALIVE (1974) ★ ★
Cinemax

Writer-director Larry Cohen, a good candidate for the Roger Corman Life Achievement Award, real-

ly outdoes himself in the tastelessness department with this tale of a killer infant. That's right, a murdering baby—actually a mechanical doll created by makeup/special-effects wizard Rick Baker. John Ryan, Sharon Farrell and Andrew Duggan have the leads, and their earnest perform-



It's Alive: ruthless baby.

ances partially redeem Cohen's production, as does a musical score by Bernard Herrmann (one of his last). Some viewers will find everything offensive, others ridiculous, and a few may honestly enjoy it. Take your pick. (Color, 91 min.) (E.H.)

KING: MONTGOMERY TO MEMPHIS (1970) ★ ★ ★ ★
Black Entertainment Television

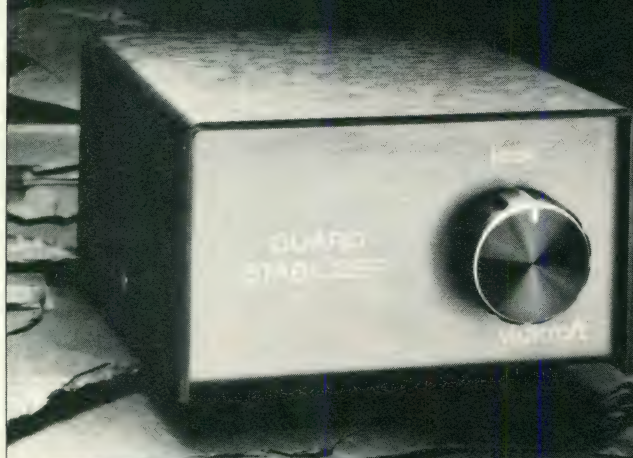
Raw slices of documentary footage have rarely spoken with such elo-

quence—but then, rarely have their subjects. The political life of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. is chronicled from his role in the Montgomery bus boycott to his championing of Memphis sanitation workers just before his assassination in 1968. But the main focus is on King's speeches and, particularly, his stirring "I have a dream" oration at the 1963 March on Washington—which is presented (for once) in its entirety. The footage is virtually the same as that in another 1970 release, *King: A Filmed Record... Montgomery to Memphis*, but it is not interspersed with the latter's superfluous "bridges." Another directorial coup is the omission of any voice-over narration, keeping the spotlight right where it belongs—on the dynamism and dignity of King and on some still-shocking images of the brutal reaction to civil rights marches in Selma, Chicago and elsewhere. It's all fascinating and tapeworthy. King's speech in defense of the Voting Rights Act is again timely. Directed by Ely Landau. (Color, B&W, 104 min.) (W.S.)

THE KREMLIN LETTER (1970) ★ ★ ★
Superstation WOR

A strange, labyrinthine spy thriller that seems to sputter a lot before it (sort of) coheres into a powerful climax. Patrick O'Neal plays an operative enlisted by unorthodox

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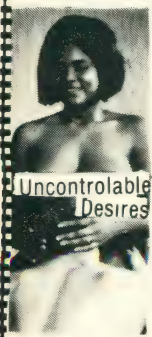
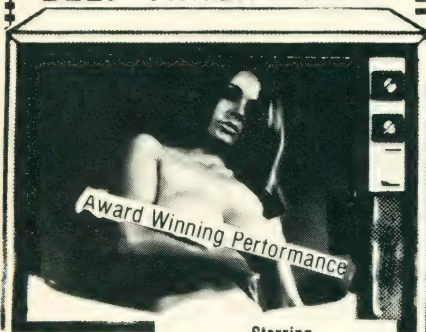


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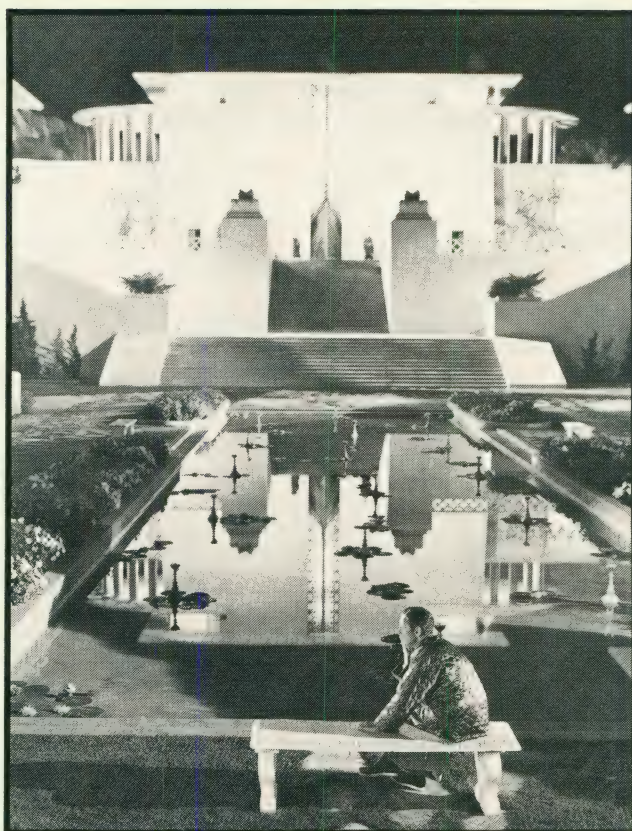
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intelligence chief Richard Boone for a team whose mission is to ferret out a secret letter potentially damaging to both the Soviets and the Americans. O'Neal and the team member he falls in love with (Barbara Parkins) are somewhat colorless, but Bibi Andersson (as a Moscow madam) is vivid and Boone combines good-ol'-boy nonchalance and an underlying ruthlessness into a riveting performance. Despite its ups and downs, the movie contains scenes of sharp dialogue and a bitterly ironic ending that make for a better-than-average intriguer—though it's not always easy to put it all together. Directed by John Huston. With Max von Sydow, Orson Welles, George Sanders. (Color, 113 min.) (W.S.)

LADY FOR A NIGHT
(1941) ★ ★

Superstation WTBS

An interesting John Wayne misfire—from the early post-*Stagecoach* days when Hollywood was still searching for the right image for him. Republic, which had Wayne under contract during the period, tried several non-western approaches, such as this one, an early 19th-century costume melodrama with Joan Blondell top-billed as the owner of a gambling ship. Handsomely produced by Republic standards and competently directed by Leigh Jason, it's well acted by Wayne, Blondell, Ray Middleton, Blanche Yurka and



Colman in the original *Lost Horizon*: more than a fountain of youth.

Philip Merivale—but the hour-and-a-half seems like three by the time it's over. Only for John Wayne completists." (B&W, 87 min.) (E.H.)

LITTLE BIG MAN (1970) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WGN

Westerns were never quite like this before. Dustin Hoffman gives a *tour de force* performance as a leathery 121-year-old who recounts his adventures growing up in the wild, wild West of yesteryear. These include kidnapping by Indians and meeting both Hickok and Custer. Director Arthur Penn sensitively explores the tragic subject of Indian genocide while keeping an ironic, often humorous approach through Hoffman's mishaps. With Faye Dunaway and Martin Balsam. (Color, 150 min.) (R.S.)

LOST HORIZON (1937) ★ ★ ★ ★

Home Box Office

You'll probably be seeing a lot of old Frank Capra movies coming out of the vaults this spring—in honor of Capra's 85th birthday. This is one of his most famous—yet not so often shown because of the '73 remake. The original *Shangri-La* tale holds up beautifully, with lots of style and atmosphere. Good acting and a good script also help, as Ronald Colman and a group of fellow travelers crash in the Himalayas and are spirited off to a secret Tibetan valley of peace and longevity. Lost kingdoms and eternal youth have since become hack movie themes, but this one, based on James Hilton's novel, remains by far the best. With Jane Wyatt, Sam Jaffe and H.B. Warner. (B&W, 118 min.) (R.S./R.H.) (Cont.)

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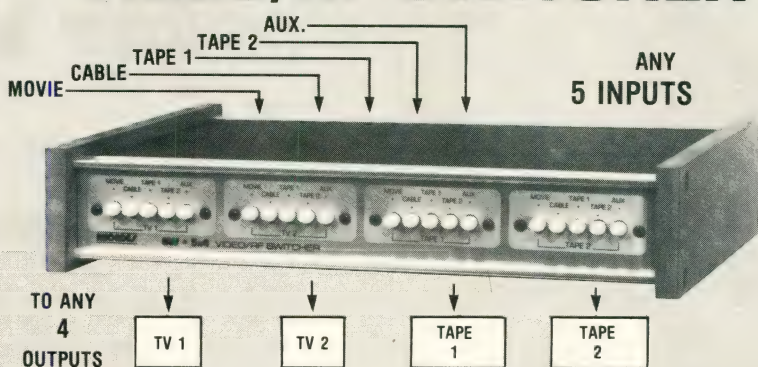
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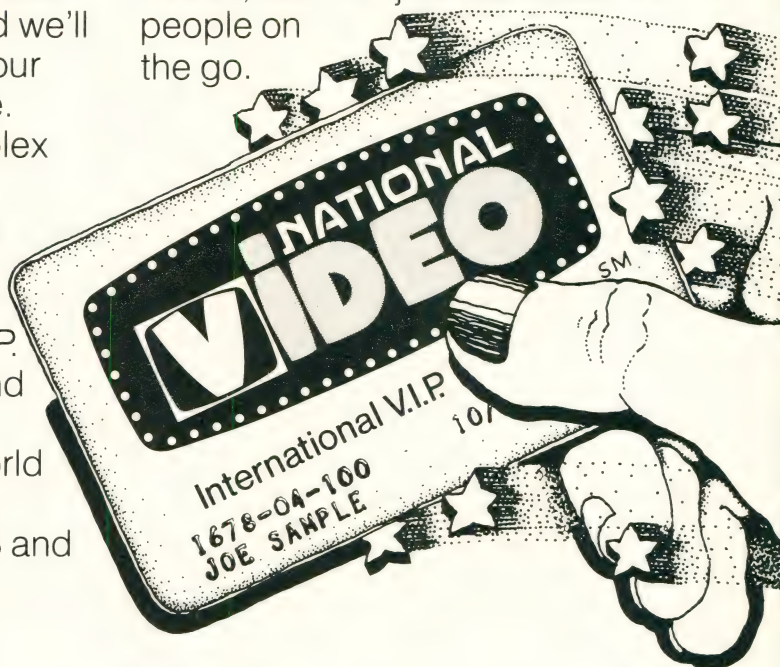
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THE LUCK OF THE IRISH**(1948) ★ ★ ★****Superstation WOR**

Where's this one been hiding? After returning an overgrown leprechaun's gold, reporter Tyrone Power wins his undying devotion and unsought marital guidance as he chooses between an Irish lass and the boss's daughter. Romance aside, Cecil Kellaway's leprechaun has to be seen to be believed. You'll want to freeze-frame on his churlish expressions and athletic leaps. With Anne Baxter and Lee J. Cobb. (B&W, 99 min.) (R.S.)

THE MIRACLE OF MORGAN'S CREEK**(1944) ★ ★ ★ ★****Superstation WOR**

Trudy Kockenlocker (Betty Hutton) meets, marries and beds with a G.I. one night under the influence of demon rum—and wakes up the next morning pregnant and minus mister, who's shipped out for parts unknown. Worse yet, she can't remember much of what happened. Enter Norval Jones (Eddie Bracken), who has worshipped Trudy from afar and will do anything to gain her favor—like marrying her. A '40s comedy classic that just barely kept within the Hays Office strictures of the time, it's the best of writer-director Preston Sturges' movies and has more hilarious moments than space permits us to describe. William Demarest is hysterical as Trudy's apoplectic dad, and such Sturges stock-company regulars as

Jimmy Conlin, Al Bridge and Porter Hall have juicy roles as well. Brian Donleavy makes a brief appearance in the story's framing scenes, and you'll never forget Sturges' parting line. (B&W, 99 min.) (E.H.)

MONTEREY POP (1969) ★ ★ ★ ★**Superstation WOR**

The first and still one of the best of the rock concert movies. D.A. Pennebaker directed this action-packed portrait of the Monterey Pop festival. Innovative camerawork captured the late '60s event in a lively style that influenced virtually all subsequent concert movies. Included are great performances by Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Otis Redding, The Who and others. (Color, 88 min.) (C.K.)

MORGAN (1966) ★ ★**Wometco Home Theatre**

Highly regarded at the time of its original release, this British comedy doesn't hold up under re-evaluation. David Warner, playing an offbeat English artist with a gorilla fixation, can't handle the rejection from wife Vanessa Redgrave, who's divorcing him for another man. It's all firmly rooted in the mod '60s, with director Karel Reisz utilizing extensive hand-held camera shots and almost subliminally quick cutting in spots, rendering some scenes virtually impossible to sit through. The screenplay remains controversially misogynistic. (B&W, 97 min.) (E.H.)



Mortal Storm's Stewart, Sullivan, Young: facing the facts.

THE MORTAL STORM**(1940) ★ ★ ★ ★****Superstation WGN**

It seems incredible to some of us today that so many Americans in the '30s were unaware of the real nature of Hitler and the Nazis (especially their treatment of Jews) until fictionalized movies such as this one started appearing in the late '30s. Since some biographies of Franklin D. Roosevelt, appearing recently for the 100th anniversary of his birth in 1882, claim that FDR himself didn't have reliable information about what was going on in the concentration camps until '39 or

'40, Hollywood can be credited with coming to grips with contemporary problems most boldly for that era. This MGM production, directed by Frank Borzage, remains a powerful if occasionally sentimental portrait of a world disintegrating around its characters—specifically a genial Jewish professor in an Alpine town, his Aryan wife and some of his students. Frank Morgan (best-known for his befuddled comedy performances in *The Wizard of Oz*, etc.) is superb in a rare dramatic role as the professor, and Robert Young will surprise fans who know

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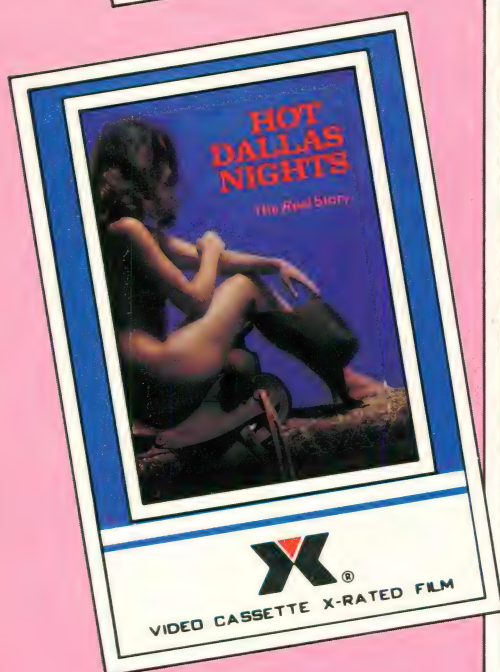
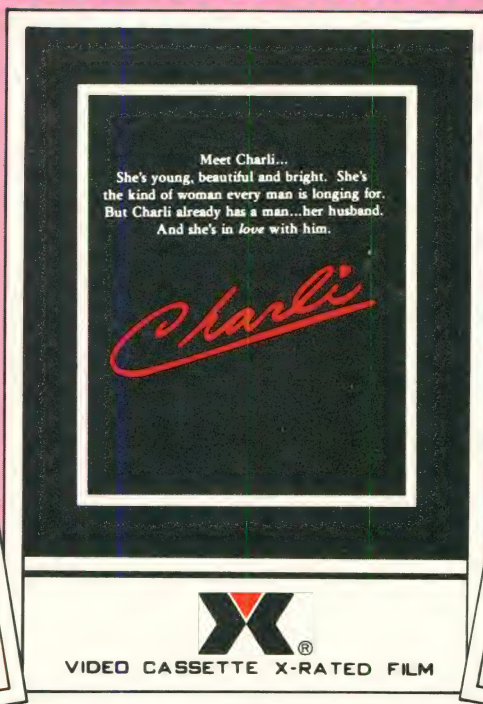


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only his later TV roles with his chilling portrayal of a young Nazi on the rise. Margaret Sullivan, James Stewart, Robert Stack, Irene Rich, Maria Ouspenskaya, Ward Bond and Dan Dailey Jr. are all impressive. Few later anti-Nazi dramas, in fact, have said as much as well. (B&W, 100 min.) (R.H.)

NEW YORK, NEW YORK (1977) ★ ★ ★ ★

NBC-TV (tentative)

Despite a number of major musical sequences and the presence of Liza Minnelli in the lead, this is essentially a searingly realistic drama about a sax player (Robert DeNiro) and the singer (Liza) he falls in love with at the end of WWII—and how they're driven apart by a combination of career drives and their own inabilities to cope with the crazy music world of "in" one day, "out" the next. DeNiro is outstanding in conveying the essence of a non-verbal jazzman (clearly modeled after several '40s and '50s jazz greats). Liza is every inch as good in a characterization that has more than a few elements of Judy Garland in it—including the way she belts out the great title number at the end. The movie now includes an excellent production number cut from original theatrical showings. With Georgie Auld (who also recorded DeNiro's sax solos for the soundtrack), Mary Kay Place, Lionel Stander and Larry Kert. (Color, 143 min.) (R.H.)

ODE TO BILLY JOE (1976) ★ ★

The Movie Channel

What made Billy Joe jump off the Tallahatchie Bridge? Well, director Jethro Bodine (Max Baer) gives us one answer that's likely to keep gay

THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE (1981) ★ ★ ★

The Movie Channel

Bob Rafelson directed this far steamier version of the '40s noir classic with the proper amount of



Liza Minnelli in New York, New York: a cut number restored.

activists hopping mad for some time. Based on Bobbie Gentry's hit song, this movie has a few moments worth watching, but most of it is just a routine rural romance. Robby Benson (as Billy) and Glynnis O'Connor (his belle) do their best to keep this ode afloat. (Color, 108 min.) (R.F.)

desperation and shadows. Jack Nicholson has John Garfield's old role as the drifter who falls in love with a beautiful but unfulfilled married woman, Jessica Lange (in Lana Turner's former role). Their red-hot passion leads to the murder of her husband (John Colicos). The ending is a bit different this time, but the

moral (or immoral) remains the same. Worth a gander if you've seen the original, and probably even more enjoyable if it's all new to you. (Color, 120 min.) (M.T.)

RIDE 'EM COWBOY (1942) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WGN

Ella Fitzgerald's singing of "A-Tisket A-Tasket" shares the limelight with some of Abbott and Costello's burlesque routines in this fast-paced western farce. One of the duo's best comedies casts them as rodeo vendors on the lam from an Indian chief who wants to make Lou a son-in-law. Dick Foran is a western novelist out to corral cowgirl Anne Gwynne in the perfunctory subplot. Western fans will also enjoy an action-packed appearance by Johnny Mack Brown. Some TV showings cut Lou's "crazy horse" dream sequence, so beware. (B&W, 86 min.) (M.T.)

THE SAVAGE FIVE (1979) ★ ★

Superstation WGN

Take the number in the title and multiply it by a thousand and that's about how many times you've seen this one before. It's another kung fu actioner in which both heroes and villains seem to have been born with trampolines for feet. Chinese-made, it's a veritable ripoff plotwise of Hollywood's *The Magnificent Seven* (which, in turn, was stolen from Japan's *Seven Samurai*), involving the efforts of five kung fu masters to aid townspeople terrorized by ban-

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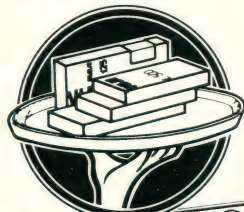
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mits. With David Chiang, Ti Lung and Chen Kaun-Tai. (Color, 100 min.) (M.T.)

THE SEDUCTION OF MIMI (1972) ★ ★ ★

Bravo

Mimi being a very male factory hand, and his seduction being as



Mimi's Giannini: sex refugee.

much by a compromised way of life as by a woman. As the hapless Italian laborer who votes for the wrong man in a supposedly "free" election, Giancarlo Giannini finds himself running away from his repugnant wife, the mob and other persuaders—and into the bed of a

beautiful young Communist (Mariangela Melato). True to screenwriter-director Lina Wertmüller's recurring theme of sex and politics springing from the same base of power (and powerlessness), Mimi can only enjoy the subsequent love affair for so long. Although Giannini flew to stardom with Wertmüller's next feature, *Swept Away*, both he and Melato are more earthily elegant here, and the director herself much less broad. Bravo plans to show both subtitled and dubbed versions—and the latter tend to give the essentially puppy-doggish Giannini a gravelly, "macho" voice that sounds almost like the cartoon Popeye's. Two hours long in the original Italian version. (Color, 120 or 89 min.) (F.L.)

THE SEVEN LITTLE FOYS (1955) ★ ★ ★

Superstation WTBS

One of Bob Hope's last good movies casts him as famed vaudevillian Eddie Foy (whose son, Eddie Jr., played Foy in many earlier pictures, in addition to being Ronald Reagan's sidekick in the "Brass Bancroft" Secret Service series). Guest star James Cagney appears briefly to reprise his characterization of George M. Cohan—and the Cagney-Hope dancing duet is a highlight. Hope, himself a veteran ham, seems right at home in the biographical role, and the period flavor is sustained both in sumptuous production and

tasteful direction (by Mel Shavelson). (Color, 95 min.) (E.H.)

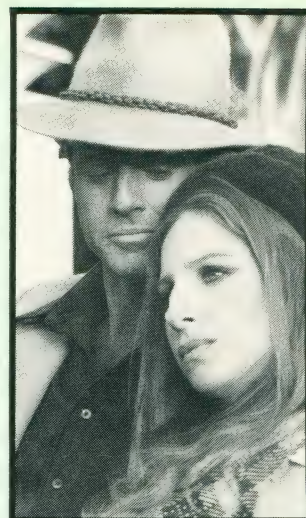
STAY HUNGRY (1976) ★ ★

Cinemax
An interesting, offbeat flick that was scarcely noticed upon its initial theatrical release—and those who *did* notice it either overrated or underrated it considerably. Arnold Schwarzenegger made his movie debut as—what else?—a body-builder, although the stars are Jeff Bridges and Sally Field, both quite good under Bob Rafelson's direction. It's essentially a comedy about body-building in the New South. Not for all tastes, but a fascinating timekiller for the adventurous movie maven. With Scatman Crothers. Based on the novel by Charles Gaines. (Color, 103 min.) (E.H.)

THREE CHEERS FOR THE IRISH (1940) ★ ★

Superstation WTBS

Faith and begorrah, it's Mulligan Stew—Warner Brothers-style—as straight-laced Irish patriarch Thomas Mitchell goes on the war-path when his pretty colleen of a daughter (Priscilla Lane) falls for a rake of a Scotsman (Dennis Morgan). Alan Hale, Virginia Grey and Irene Hervey are the other principal players in this minor but genial little comedy. The cast, under Lloyd Bacon's direction, chews up the scenery while affecting outrageously overdone accents. (B&W, 100 min.) (E.H.)



Way's Redford, Streisand: teary.

THUNDERBIRDS IN OUTER SPACE (1981) ★ ★

Showtime

Waste time on this? Yes. Although designed for kids, this compilation version of the Gerry and Sylvia Anderson *Thunderbirds* TV series actually contains some of the best miniature work ever done for the small screen. Shot in "Supermarionation" (a.k.a. semi-automated puppets), one episode, concerning a family of adventurers attempting a rescue in deep space, actually has its share of suspense and some of the best effects sequences around.

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April, 1982 **131**

Bloodthirsts, Firewraths, Spydroths



Phil Wiswell

Doomwinged Bloodthirsts, Firewraths and the Spydroth Tarantulus are among the monsters planted in your paths through Crystal Caverns, Infernal Infernos and other labyrinths you must work your way

through to find 10 Rings of Power in a video game that melds medieval fantasy with home computer technology. The first game in Odyssey's Master Strategy Series, the Tolkien-style "The Quest for the Rings" offers adventure, action and strategy in a manner unlike any other current video game.

Rings of Power

The basic "Quest" game pits one player, as the evil Ringmaster, against two other players, acting as a team of heroes out to recapture the 10 hidden Rings of Power. But any number from one to five players can play by using some of the many variations. Among its unusual features, this video game uniquely combines a mapboard and playing tokens with microcomputer technology. All tactical action occurs on-screen while strategy is planned on the board.

The Ringmaster starts the game by placing all ring and monster markers (or tokens—but *not* Tolkiens) on any of 23 castle locations (with such names as Gorgonwyck and Angryph) shown on the board, then covering all 23 locations with castle tokens. The heroes will not know what awaits them in any particular castle. The Ringmaster's plan is to force them to visit as many castles as possible.

Once the board is set up and the video cartridge switched on, the two other players select which of four heroes they will be. The Warrior carries an enchanted sword which can wound or kill enemies. The Wizard has the power to cast demobilizing

spells on monsters, holding them at bay. The Phantom can walk through walls that others must go around. And the Changeling can become invisible at will. Thus, there are six combinations of heroes to be used in any adventure. (Heroes are maneuvered with the joysticks; monsters are computer-controlled.) Before setting off on a quest, all players must agree on the number of turns (50, 75 or 100) the heroes will have to recapture the rings.

Now the heroes choose one of 11 ports of entry around the board and advance to the first castle. The Ringmaster turns over the castle



"The Quest for the Rings": a mix of medieval fantasy and microprocessors.

token, and enters into the computer console whether there is a ring present; what, if any, special monsters lurk there; and which of four types of labyrinths the heroes will have to fight in: Dungeons, Crystal Caverns (which have invisible walls), Shifting Halls (which have moving walls) or Infernal Infernos (which have flaming red walls that snuff out a hero on contact). Each time the heroes move to a new castle they will do battle in one of these four settings against whichever monsters the Ringmaster preselected.

All four types of labyrinths contain Orcs (ugly ogres) and Firewraths (enslaved souls of the Dragon's past victims) that the heroes must defend themselves against. The Warrior's sword will kill them; the Wizard's spells will halt their advance.

In addition, the Ringmaster has three other kinds of creatures to throw your way, which make Orcs and Firewraths seem like Boy and Girl Scouts! The Spydroth Tarantulus, a spider-like creature, moves slowly from side to side, but can drop on your hero's head from above faster than you can say "Little Miss Moffet." Doomwinged Bloodthirsts move even faster. But the real threat comes from the Dragon, whose mouth can shoot a ball of flame nearly across the screen.

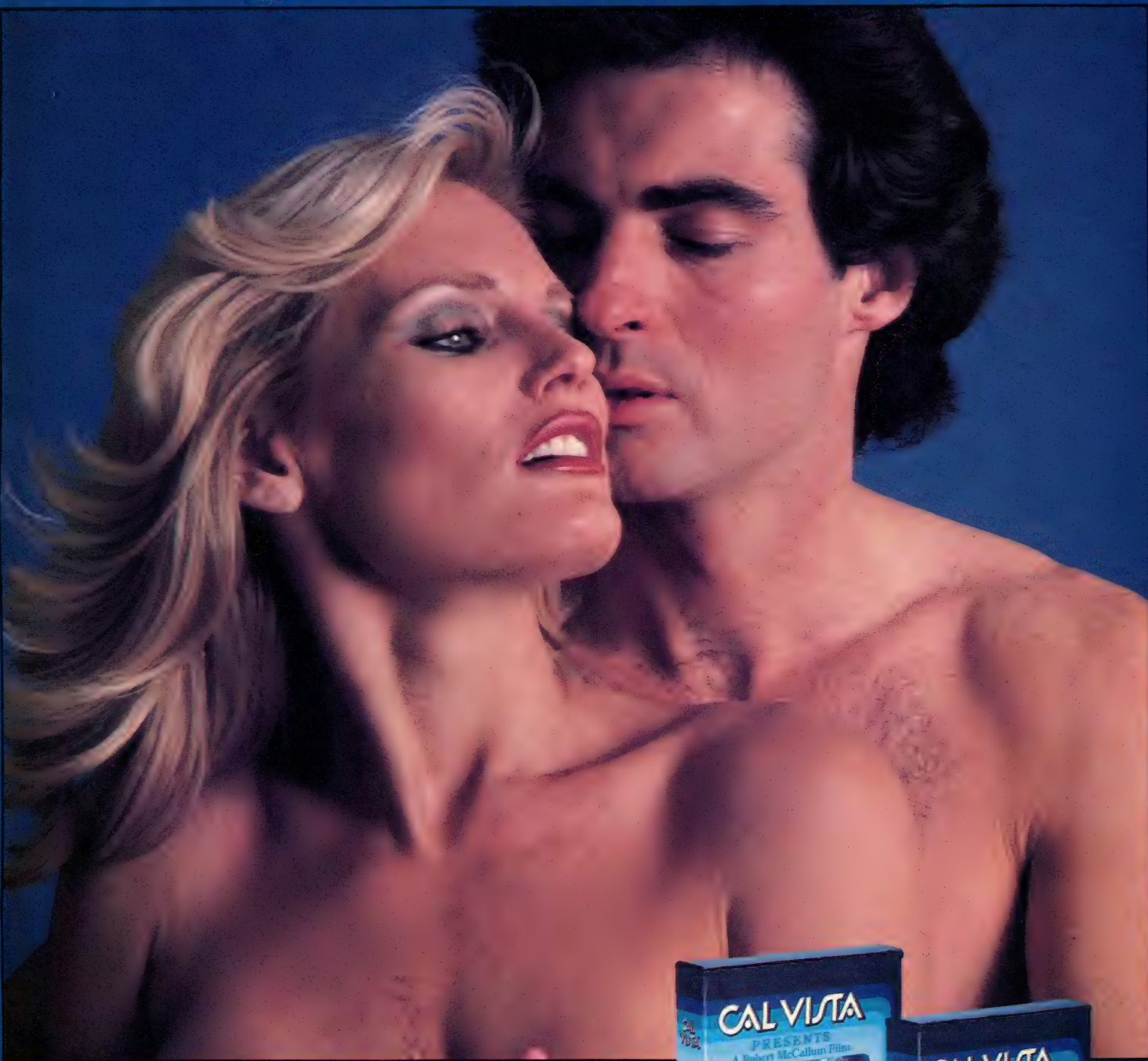
So dread are all these special monsters that no single hero can beat them to a ring or an escape passage. This is where the game gets fun. You have to cooperate with another hero to be successful. Heroes always show up in the middle of the screen, surrounded by a maze of walls and enemies whose touch means death. If there is a ring on the screen, the heroes must try to battle their way to it. Either hero may capture a ring simply by touching it. If there is no ring, the heroes must battle their way to an escape passage indicated by an arrow.

Wizardly Tactics

Video tactics become apparent at this point. A Warrior can slip through to a ring while a Wizard holds monsters at bay with his spells. A Phantom hiding in a wall attracts the other monsters like bugs to a lantern, giving another hero a chance to go for the ring. And it's great fun just experimenting with the different combinations of heroes to find out which ones will work best for you.

If video games are to become lasting challenges, they'll need to go in the direction "The Quest for the Rings" has pioneered. They'll need to challenge the minds as well as the wrists. □

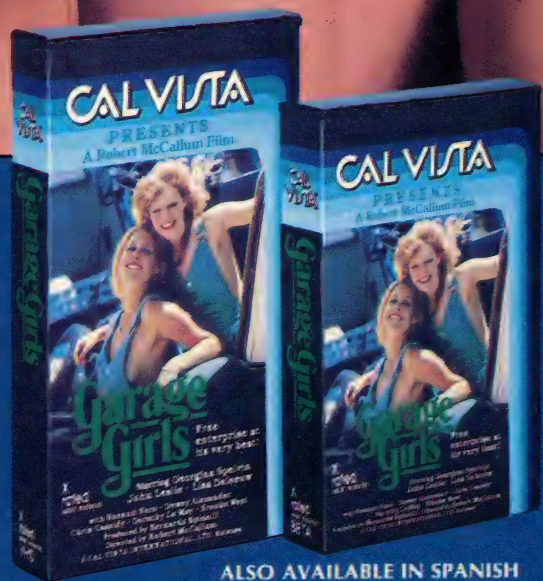
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Sound advice for better video listening



Robert Angus

If you wonder why *2001* and *Superman* lose so much of their power in translation to video, the answer isn't just the small screen. It's also the small sound. Instead of hearing the soundtrack through a sophisticated multichannel speaker system such as those in first-run movie theaters, you might be listening to the movies' soundtracks through a tinny replacement speaker powered by a half-watt amplifier circuit with distortion levels rising as high as 10 percent of the total sound.

You can improve the quality of your TV audio even if you aren't quite ready to invest in one of the new TV sets and video systems introduced this year that take this problem into account. While these new systems come with built-in low-distortion stereo amplifiers, with rear-panel jacks to facilitate interconnection with other video products or with a high fidelity audio component system, you can add similar equipment to your present set, though you can't get real stereo. So, if you don't feel like scrapping that nearly new 21-inch color set, but you would like to listen to Music Television (MTV) stereophonically or enjoy to the fullest the digitally recorded sound on those laser discs you got for your birthday, here are some suggestions.

Speaker Taps

One of the simplest and least expensive methods of upgrading audio quality involves having a TV serviceperson provide speaker taps on the back of your set. These, connected to the output stage of the TV amplifier, should provide enough power to drive a very efficient speaker or pair of speakers. The

sound won't be stereophonic, and you'll still have to put up with whatever distortion lurks in the amplifier circuit, but you should find an immediate improvement in bass and treble response.

Or you can ask the serviceperson to provide an output jack so that you can feed the signal from the TV amplifier to the auxiliary input on your audio amplifier or receiver. By splitting the signal so that it feeds both left and right channels, it's possible to simulate the stereo effect. Advantages over the first idea include the ability to use speaker systems with lower efficiency, to have the use of front-panel tone controls and no need to buy new equipment. You still have the disadvantage of passing along any noise or distortion present in the TV amplifier.

Sound Components

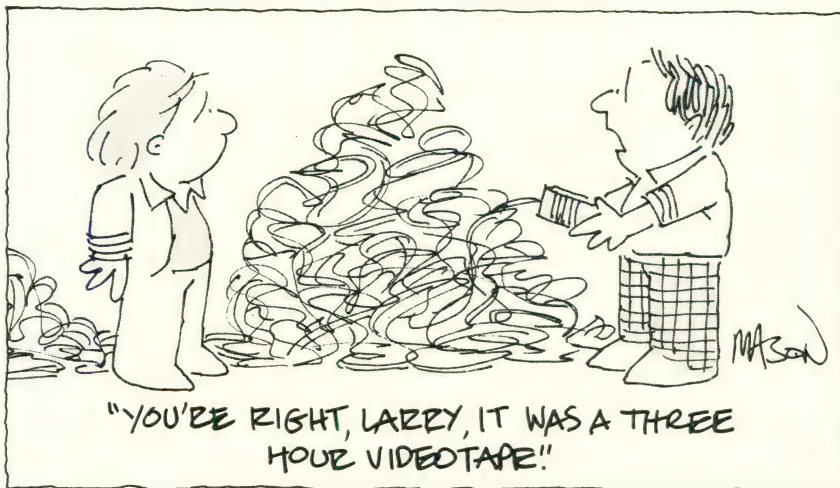
One solution that does involve buying a new piece of equipment is to purchase a component TV tuner, which interfaces between your TV set and your existing stereo system. The signal it provides is very low in level, comparable to that from an FM tuner. And like an FM tuner, it tends to have very low distortion, which means a much cleaner sound than you can get from your TV set. TV tuners may be mono or stereo, may incorporate FM stereo or AM radio and cost from about \$80 to

\$400. When using a component video tuner, be sure to turn down the audio on your TV set and do all your listening through your component stereo system.

VCRs as Tuners

If you own a video recorder, you can use its tuning section and audio output for the same purpose. On some older models, you may have to keep the switch set to the "record" mode in order to provide a signal at the output, while newer units do so automatically. And some of the new stereo VCRs are designed specifically with this in mind. The advantage of using the VCR tuner is that it includes RF conversion, providing separate component-tuner performance without the need to buy something new. The inputs and outputs also are there so you can connect the video recorder with other audio and video equipment.

Whether you prefer to get by with your present stereo speakers or buy something different, the fact is that you're going to get a lot more out of the video you watch if you have good audio. With rock concerts on MTV, one of the *Smokey* movies with a stereophonic soundtrack on videodiscs or tapes, blockbuster movies on network TV and Live from Lincoln Center performances on PBS, two speakers are always better than one. □



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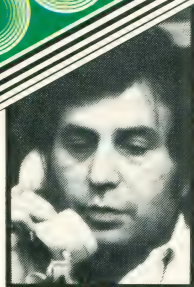
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A money-saving new TV set—maybe



Robert Gerson

Like the latest in aesthetics, the coming trend in electronics will probably be "video minimalism."

First we got the basic 12-channel model. Then came the "all-channel" set that, with its UHF tuner,

has 82-channel capacity. Just a couple of years ago we saw the first "cable-ready" set with the built-in capability of tuning in up to 127 broadcast and cable channels. Last year it was the "video-ready" TV set, equipped with a video-input jack to handle unmodulated signals from a VCR, a disc player or other video "source" equipment. Now on the horizon is yet another channel-tuning innovation. Two hundred channels? No: two.

The set is called the "Specific Signal Display Device" (SSDD). Instead of giving you 12, 82 or 127 channels, it offers only channels 3 and 4. This idea for what, at first glance, seems to be a giant step backwards comes from the Sanyo Manufacturing Company, the American color-TV producing subsidiary of Japan's Sanyo Electric (and which is partly owned by Sears).

'Dedication'

What Sanyo proposes to build, subject to approval from the FCC, are "dedicated" TV receivers. Since cable TV, VCRs, videodisc players, video games and home computers all put out their signals on either channel 3 or 4, why, if you intend to buy a color TV primarily for use with these video components, should you have to pay for additional tuning capability you won't need?

Sanyo estimates that an SSDD, with its simple two-position channel selector switch, would cost \$30 to \$40 less than a conventional TV receiver. The actual savings would probably be higher, because SSDDs would have the quality of sets that

feature more expensive electronic, rather than mechanical, tuners. According to Sanyo's figures, if only 10 percent of the estimated 11 million color TV sets that will be bought this year were SSDDs, the American buying public would save \$44 million, and that's not counting the savings that would stem from fewer repairs because of the absence of a tuner.

All-or-Nothing Law

The fly in Sanyo's ointment is the All-Channel Tuning Law that went into effect in 1964. It amended FCC regulations to require that TV sets be capable of receiving all 82 VHF and UHF channels. Under this law, a monitor that can't bring in any channels is okay, but a receiver that will tune in on just one or two is a no-no. Sanyo has asked the FCC for a waiver that would allow it to go into limited production and test consumer response. If the FCC gives the need-

ed clearance, the first SSDDs could go on sale by the end of this year.

Another backward-sounding innovation to keep your eye out for this year is the smaller big-screen projection TV set. The color TV industry had less success than expected with the 45-inch and 50-inch systems they poured out last year, even though sales more than doubled to about 120,000. The feeling of the manufacturers is that the projection TV sets are just too bulky, and the average \$2,500 price tag too high.

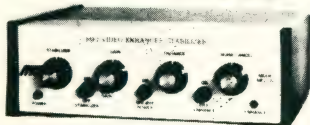
Their answer will be a new generation of 40-inch, rear-screen projectors housed in cabinets that will be higher, but otherwise not much bigger, than large console TV sets. The companies expect prices for the projection systems to be in the \$2,000 neighborhood.

The way things are going, the next thing we'll probably see is a giant mini-combo. □



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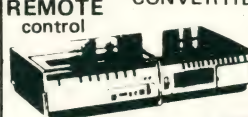
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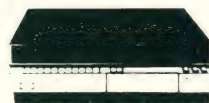
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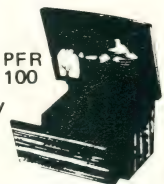


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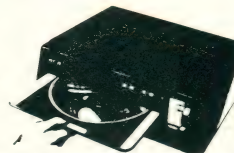
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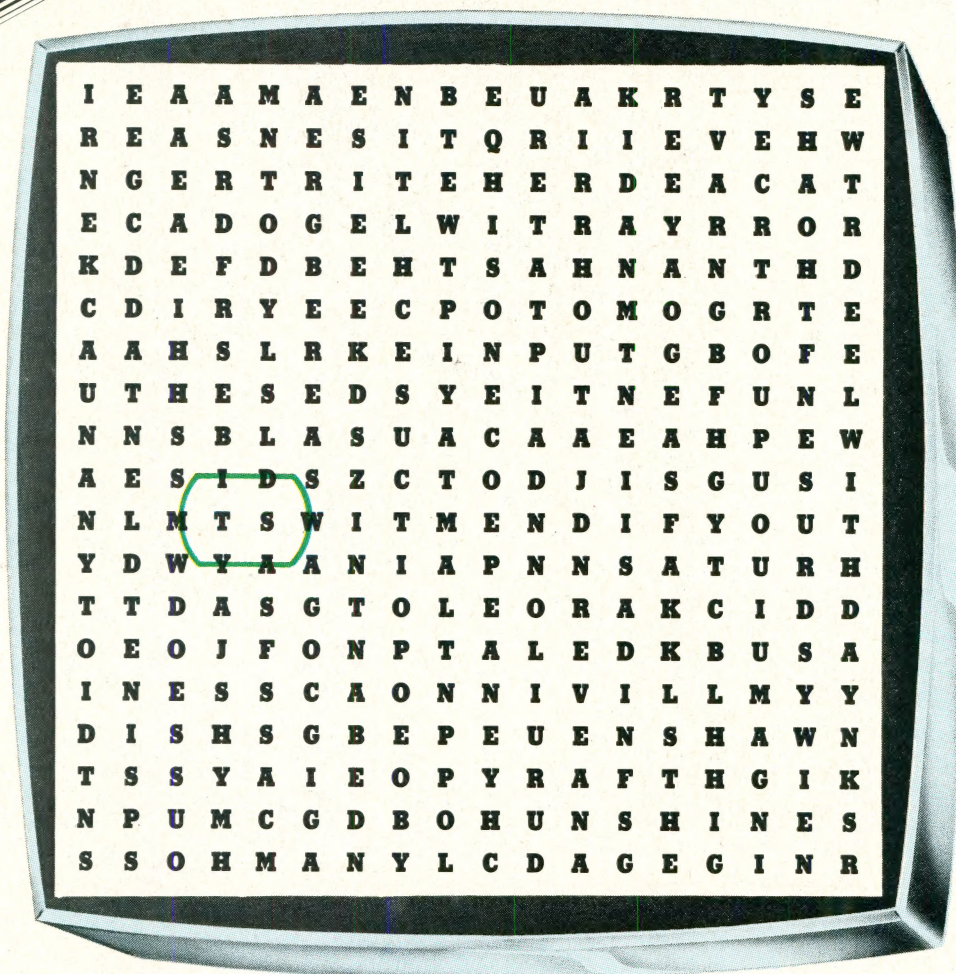
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